THE WESSEX OF ROMANCE


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WILKINSON SHERREN

BOMBAY BRANCH
OF THE
Royal Asiatic Society.

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MR. THOMAS HARDY'S BIRTHPLACE, UPPER BOCKHAMPTON

Photo by S. Tree, Dorchester

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BY

WILKINSON SHERREN

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

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INTRODUCTION

SINCE the pen of Mr. Hardy first introduced the public to "the old ancient" land of Wessex, pilgrims from all parts of England and America have journeyed thither to find a basis for greater love in greater knowledge. To this large class, and to those who have never visited the district, as well as to students of literature and life, this book is dedicated by a man of Wessex, whose family has resided on the soil since the seventeenth century. This personal fact is only offered as an invitation to confidence, which, I trust, the following pages will justify.

An expensive work on Wessex came out while these sheets were being passed for press, and lest there should be any suggestion of plagiarism, it may be well to state that the whole of this work, except the Bibliography, was written by the middle of June, 1901.

Happily, it was never my intention to confine "The Wessex of Romance" within the limits of topography; it was conceived on a different plan, with the large area of interest and information which, in my opinion, the subject demanded.

Wessex is the central theme, and every available

fact which would tend to illuminate Mr. Hardy's treatment of it has been incorporated. Aiming at the completest exposition of the subject possible, the well-known novels have been approached through a character study of the people, thus providing a rough sketch of the author's "material."

All the anecdotes are authentic and wherever possible parallel instances of superstition have been given to those contained in Mr. Hardy's pages. In the preparation of this phase I am indebted to many of the clergy in the Diocese of Salisbury, and to the following gentlemen in particular: G. J. Bennett, Esq., Wareham; G. Hibbs, Esq., Bere Regis; Fred Taylor, Esq.; the Editorial Staff of the *Dorset County Chronicle*; J. A. Sherren, Esq., J.P., Weymouth; and W. B. Wildman, Esq., Sherborne. The authorities consulted included the Transactions of the Dorset Archæological Society, the researches of H. J. Moule, Esq., and Hutchins' monumental History of Dorset.

The section dealing with Mr. Hardy is an attempt to account for his existence as a novelist by an investigation and estimate of the probable forces and tendencies which constituted his environment during childhood, youth, and young manhood. Vignettes of several Wessex towns, their corporate history, and a summary of the fictitious incidents which link them to Mr. Hardy's books, precede a Synopsis of the Wessex Novels, a history of Wessex, a Glossary of the dialect, and a Bibliography of Mr. Hardy's work, which will be found useful for reference.

I wish it to be expressly understood that all the

matter contained in the following pages has been written without the slightest co-operation or foreknowledge on the part of Mr. Hardy. The sole responsibility for all its statements and views rests with the present writer.

The publication of fresh and unauthorized biographical detail has been studiously avoided, and only those facts about the Wessex novelist's life which are now the common property of the world have been given, and these were incorporated with a view to adding artistic completeness to my conception of the book as a whole.

W. S.

January, 1902.

CONTENTS

I

PAGE

THE WESSEX PEOPLE: Their Character, Customs, Superstitions, and Folklore 1

II

THOMAS HARDY.—An Attempt to Account for the Novelist by an Investigation of the Environing Influences of Childhood and Young Manhood, together with Biographical and other Facts. Some Comments on the Poems. His Work Reviewed in the Light of this Investigation . . 45

III

SOME WESSEX TOWNS AND PLACES.—The Gibraltar of Wessex — Budmouth Regis — Casterbridge and District—Anglebury—Concerning the Turbervilles of Kingsbere—Havenpool—Warborne—Knollsea—Corvsgate Castle—Sherton Abbas—Shaston—Port Bredy 82

IV

THE WESSEX NOVELS.—A careful Synopsis of each Novel in order of Publication, a List of Characters Prefacing each Synopsis 193

V

PAGE

THE PAGEANTRY OF THE PAST.—An Anecdotal History of Wessex from the Earliest Times to the Year 1872 243

VI

THE DIALECT: A Study and a Glossary . . . 290
A LIST OF IDENTIFIED PLACE NAMES . . . 302

VII

BIBLIOGRAPHY.—Up to and including "Poems of the Past and the Present". 305

ILLUSTRATIONS

Thomas Hardy's Birthplace . . . . . *Frontis.*

Egdon Heath . . . . . *To face p.* 48

At the Gate of "Sylvania Castle," The Gibraltar of Wessex . . . . . „ 96

The Turberville Aisle and Tombs . . . . „ 144

The "Mask," Casterbridge . . . . . „ 192

The Quay, Budmouth Regis . . . . . „ 240

An Authentic Turberville Document . . . „ 280

THE WESSEX PEOPLE

Their Character

FREQUENTLY the term a Dorset labourer, has been used as an opprobrious epithet, and a synonym for unintelligent apathy. There he is, a speck of life against the dull earth he is tilling, warped and stained by labour, his speech unready, his gait slow, his intellectual processes tardy. Reverence, however, not unmingled with wonder should enter into the contemplation of him—reverence for his humanity, and wonder at the unhindered continuance of certain characteristics. Poor and unenlightened he may be, yet the Wessex peasant is lineally descended from a noble ancestry. Principally Celtic in origin, he is a survivor of the Saxon occupation, his very dialect embalming words of the old dead tongue, his superstitions eloquent of an inbred paganism which the Christian ages have been unable to eradicate. He is a human palimpsest, and were it possible to develop

and express the impressions latent in his brain, the past ages would glow into actuality like renewed embers. Even the shadow of those fierce marauders, the Danes, was projected across the gulf of time into the nineteenth century, and until within recent years, there existed a vague story among the folk around Wool concerning certain red-haired savages who burnt and slew without mercy, a unique instance of the survival of pre-natal impressions.

Away to the south of Portland two contrary tides meet, the surface of the water being troubled with the foamy collision even in the calmest weather. So in life, opposing currents of thought, custom, and habit clash together in opposition; the seeds of a silent revolution are sown, and fresh impetus given to the unending warfare between the old and the new. For the sake of reference, epochs as far as possible are identified with the reigns of kings, but at the best this is a rough and ready method, because ancient and modern conditions overlap and merge into one another with imperceptible transitions. The aspect emphasised by many historians and social students is the first dramatic juncture between the antagonistic forces, though, on the other hand, the immediate effect of revolutionary ideas only reach the pioneering minds, who either reject or popularize the original methods and theories, the real battle taking place when the

new spirit encounters the average man or woman. The arena wherein life's eternal conflict is exhibited stretches from pole to pole; in all lands the silent contest is being waged, and the spirit of it is carried over all the dim pathways of the sea. To estimate the significance of progress and to understand the results of its collision with less advanced tendencies, human nature should be viewed against the uncrowded background of Wessex, where common folk can still be touched and moved by the love and labour of their fellows, where the lowliest man is a hero, and the most obscure maid a queen of dreams.

Certain disabilities have attended the diffusion of scholastic knowledge among the peasantry. By it, the acquisition of natural lore has been stunted, native intelligence has been restricted by the discovery of short intellectual cuts, the desire for the artificialities of urban life has been engendered, love of the soil weakened, and a dialect as grand and ancient as any in the kingdom brought within measurable distance of extinction. Other changes have been brought about by the incalculable mutations of commerce, which have obliterated some of the industries wherein humble Wessex folk at one time gained a livelihood. Decayed handicrafts that are now only a memory in here and there a failing brain, once throve in various places,

In former days the hum of the spinning wheel could be heard in many a cottage in Blackmore Vale, and the making of Honiton lace was carried on in Portland and elsewhere. Many a fine wooden ship was fashioned in the yards of the principal coast towns ere the era of iron paralysed the trade and dispersed the workmen. These are only a few instances of the wrecks left in the wake of progress ; they are eloquent of the period when industries were not monopolized by the iron fingers of machinery, when the work of the craftsmen formed as integral a part of his being as the threads of the silkworm.

Now, only the old people term young women "maidens" or "maidies." Wherever possible, girls are sent away from the villages on visits to the towns and cities, there to be perverted with the shifting fashions and fancies of the great world, and these they seek to reproduce on their return home. But the latest styles of holding a skirt or dressing the hair become obsolete ere they have percolated through the human strata to the village rank and file ; nevertheless, the anachronisms of style are none the less pleasing on account of their novelty, there being no one, apparently, to put in a plea for fitness. The rustics have awakened to self-consciousness, and the recognition of their own peculiarities has deformed their nature and interfered with its natural growth. Habits

and customs, the deposit of centuries, are cast aside for the whims of an hour, because the quaint and steadfast country ways have been fretted by the fever of modern unrest. This aspect is mirrored in Mr. T. Hardy's *The Woodlanders*, Grace Melbury being a typical example of the Wessex maiden in a state of transition, though the transmuting factors have grown in intensity since the period depicted in that novel.

How far education has fostered migration to the towns is a question somewhat beyond the scope of the present study; the assertion may be safely made, however, that the rustics who respond to the siren voice of the city are those who have been moulded by the newer influences. Not among this class is the characteristic peasant found. In nearly every village and hamlet there are "granfers" and "granmers," who are the repositories of the local traditions, and these are the true representatives of the Wessex peasantry. They were moulded by conditions which have been superseded, and being unwarped by the educational tendencies set in motion in 1870, they are the true exemplars of the old order, the natural human products of the soil they love. Believing that abstract analysis should be combined with illustrations taken from life, this source of illumination, wherever pertinent, will be drawn upon.

Near where the Lovedays and Garlands of Mr. Hardy's *Trumpet Major* gathered to witness the passage of George III, there used to linger an aged man and a child. Every day when the sky was stainless, he set out from an adjacent village with his granddaughter; while she stretched her tiny hands after the daisies, and held the buttercups beneath her chin "to see if she liked butter," he sat on a flat stone by the wayside and waited. The main portion of his manhood had been spent in driving a carrier's van along the highway he haunted, the remainder in cracking stones. The man's attitude suggested his condition, his knarled hands bunched together as one who held the reins, his visage worn by its long exposure to the weather of every season, though it still bore traces of virility.

In early spring and late autumn an old friend worked on the flints on the other side of the road, every now and again pausing to speak a word to his aged comrade. After the ex-carrier had taken his seat for the afternoon, he gazed dreamily across the way, and greeted his companion thus:

"Arternoon, Willum; do they crackey well?"

A suitable response having been given to this inquiry, he sank into abstracted contemplation of the life that had been his own. Now, an up-to-date farmer would flash by in a smart dog-cart, a fashionably dressed

lady beside him; two wizened faces would be raised to the sunlit dazzle of the spokes, and "Hee, Hee" in wondering derision would echo from one side of the road to the other. Or a young labourer a-footing it to the Georgian watering-place for an hour's gaiety would pass in his "best blacks" garnished with a huge bunch of wallflowers and a variegated tie; and the twin chuckles would resound again. Any one who chanced to overhear the ensuing conversation between the two old men would have caught such phrases as: "Times hev a-cheanged, sonny; when I wer a hard boy, Monday arternoon coorten wer unbeknown to the likes 'o we." When the market vans sleepily rolled down Ridgeway Hill the ex-carrier grew wistfully excited; his thin hands doubled up into sinewy knots, and sparks like petrified flame suddenly glimmered in his eyes. On one of these occasions the driver reined up his van, and accosted the crouching figure thus: "Ah, wold man, the roads will miss 'ee when you'm gone."

This point of view could never have been taken by an inmate of a city, suggesting as it did the homogeneity of rural life, the union between the countryman and the fields, meads, and wandering roadways—animate and inanimate nature allied by sympathies and associations. The unconscious irony of the words, which were expressed with such rude kindliness, re-

vealed a comprehension of the mute companionship of the open road, apotheosizing it into a master in whose service the old carrier had worn out his days, and it hinted at some knowledge of the occult relationship between the soil and its children, exalting it into the ranks of human kinship.

If the roads have not missed him, there yet remains one here and there who feels that his place cannot be filled. Like many unnoted men in similar circumstances, the old man's latter days were spent in the capacity of outdoor nurse to his son's offspring. Old age had not sapped his fund of tenderness and humour, each of these emotions being brought into play by the child who darted to and fro across the green playground by the roadside. Sometimes there would be a shrill cry, and the tiny mite would distressfully whimper to the side of her guardian, and it was a sight to see him brush the little maid with his brilliant handkerchief, pucker his brows in perplexity, and murmur soothing words, such as: "Don't 'ee take on so, my pretty," "Now, dear heart o'en, don't 'ee cry no more."

Few outside his own order ever knew this old man, and strangers to the district would have found a difficulty in doing so, because of the racial differences between them. Comparatively few people ever take the trouble to detect interest beneath a fustian jacket,

and some never dream of its existence; the skirts of their contemplation being ingathered to ward off the contact. A fellow native belonging to a different sphere, desirous of becoming friendly with the aged carrier, would have found it advisable to don his shabbiest suit and discard all jewellery, and having removed civilization's artificial barrier, he would have been in a fair way to glean fragments of life which would have made him dream, had he any love and imagination in him. When the conversation had been opened up, it was easy to see the man's amazement at any one being deluded enough to fancy him to be a person of any interest. A spirit of shyness then ensued—not the shyness of the young rustic of these days who thinks to himself, "This here bloke might put I in a book"—but the shrinking born of some perception of the unfitness of detailing intimate concerns to a stranger. His tongue could only be forced over this barrier of modesty if the interlocutor happened to know of the ways of old country folk, their junketings at the ingathering of the harvest, christening parties, club walkings and Christmas dances; a surer way to dislodge a cloud of reminiscences being to venture a happy remark upon the experiences of a carrier. Anecdotes about the men and women he had carried would follow—how "Tom Samwayes wer a drawlatcheten chap, who did never

marry till his father-law that wer to be did ax en what 'ee did mean by car'ng on so wi' the maid if so be lawful matrimony accorden to Holy Church and Prayer Book wurden his meanin'." Further, it would be told how "Meary Angel never thoughted ar'n o' the maidens could come upsides wi 'er in zight o' the chaps till a strange maidy did sottle in the village, and she were left to the coorten o' Zammy Flail, the zilly carter."

Side by side with these personal recollections were memories of homeward journeys in the winter evenings, when "the wheels o' the van got a-stooded in the snow, and the hedges wer a zight for mortal eyes to see; they did look lik' long white ghostes, sure they did." Most of the anecdotes told by him contained pictures vividly sketched in the picturesque dialect of Wessex, developed to more dramatic issues, probably by the imagination which is the dowry of the race to which he belonged.

Contemplative silence usually contents the typical native; whether in his porch at eventime, or seated with younger men in the village tavern, his thoughts take a long time to get launched on the stream of speech. Casual references to bygone customs such as Maypole dancing submerge him in a dream, and he meets the glowing description of some modern pastime with a deprecatory wave of his pipe and a derisive

tongue of smoke. The old folks stand in the same relation to village life as a ruined abbey in the environs of a town; they are human curiosities valued as testamentary evidence of change in the delights and privileges of a younger age. Of natural wisdom of a homely kind they possess quite a store —their criticism of men and things generally falls short of modern perspicacity, but it is characterized by a shrewdness that is sometimes caustic.

It has been alleged with some amount of truth that morality is at a low ebb in the Wessex villages, though, like many other sweeping assertions, it is unfair in its inclusive condemnation. Compared with the ethical level of towns, it can safely be averred that the moral tone of Wessex villages is healthier, notwithstanding the potency of certain conditions which make for laxity. In judging our rustic character, the censorious critics should duly weigh the factors which militate against abstract conceptions of seemliness, and should make due allowance for their age-long influence. Intimate with the chief source of the world's tragedy in semblance of the exercise of a primal function in the brute creation, the reaction of this intimacy upon the rustic mind is inimical to the highest standard of morality, and creates a tendency to condone a lapse from it. The play of another quality, subtle in influence, possibly malign in results at crucial

moments, must be duly considered ere the peasants are sweepingly termed wilfully immoral. In face of the misfortunes incident to life, their attitude is almost Eastern in its fatalism. As a rule this attitude does not denote indifference, but the immobility of those inured to fortune's outrageous vagaries; the danger of it residing in its proneness to weaken the resistant energies. Thus handicapped by an atmosphere intensely charged with menace to the Christian ideal of conduct, any attempt to judge the peasantry is partial and unjust, unless this mischievous bias is taken into consideration. Careful students of the Wessex novels will recognize the necessity for these remarks, though they would be equally apposite to any rural district.

Opinions differ as to the advisability of inquiring into the origins of a notable novel, searching out the roots of the conception or the incidents which might have suggested a component part of it. Such an inquiry, it is believed, can in no way militate against the interest of any work of fiction worthy of such treatment, as the chance discovery of a basis of fact for an apparently fictitious element often sheds fresh light upon the nature of the people studied. The appreciative reader of *Far from the Madding Crowd* must often be forced to linger over those crusted characters—Jan Coggan, Jacob Smallbury and Joseph

Poorgrass, the bashful rustic who admitted: "Blushes hev been in the family for generations . . . 'tis a happy providence that I be no worse, and I feel the blessing." The foregathering of the peasants at *Warren's Malthouse* proved the occasion for much jollity, and at one of the informal parties at that retreat the following anecdote was told against Joseph Poorgrass:

"Once he had been working late at Yalbury Bottom, and had had a drap of drink, and lost his way as he was coming home—along through Yalbury Wood. . . . And he coming along in the middle of the night, much afeard, and not able to find his way out of the trees nohow, a' cried out 'Man-a-lost! 'Man-a-lost!' A owl in a tree happened to be crying 'Whoo-whoo-whoo?' as owls do . . . : and Joseph, all in a tremble, said, 'Joseph Poorgrass, of Weatherbury, sir'!"

A reasonable assumption concerning the origin of this anecdote is suggested by the current nickname borne by the inhabitants of a tiny hamlet near Blandford, who are known as "Houghton Owls." This whimsical appellation was earned in the following manner. Many years ago John Joyce, a native of the place, missed his way in the wood, and being both timid and benighted, he called out lustily for help. The only answer to his cries was the hoot of

the owls, mistaken by him for an answering human voice.

"I'm a man a-lost in the wood, John Joyce, of Houghton," shouted he.

"Whoo-whoo-whoo?" screeched an owl.

"Bist deaf?" snapped the aggravated man. "John Joyce, I tell 'ee."

"Whoo-whoo-whoo?" again resounded from the darkness; and it is said the man's upbraidings continued till he was overheard and rescued by a neighbouring villager.

Not knowing this story, a former rector of Houghton happened to inform a descendant of Joyce that he had seen an owl flying round the Rectory, a remark which brought forth the feeling retort: "Eh? sure—but I doant like they burrds."

Considerable savour is imparted to the peasant by his humour, which rarely scintillates, but smoulders awhile ere emerging into laughter or speech. Personal peculiarities, oddities of courtship, and matrimonial friction, provide him with unfailing well-springs of wit, frequently coloured by a caustic spirit. This bitter tincture is partly engendered by the apprehension of his own obscurity, and resentment against a cultured society enjoying privileges beyond the reach of his labour. In spite of this sombre tinge, a vein of quaint cheeriness often lends a brightening glimmer

to his nature, exemplified by Creedle in *The Woodlanders*, when he assisted Giles Winterborne in preparing a "randyvoo" in the bachelor household in honour of Grace Melbury. Supper time had arrived, and Creedle and the boy worked like galley slaves in fetching and carrying the plates and dishes, the latter expressing in quiet moments his admiration of the energetic cook.

"'I s'pose the time when you learnt all these knowing things, Mr. Creedle, was when you was in the militia?'

"'Well, yes, I seed the world that year somewhat, certainly, and mastered many arts of strange dashing life. Not but that Giles has worked hard in helping me to bring things to such perfection to-day.

"'I s'pose your memory can reach a long way back into history, Mr. Creedle?'

"'O, yes. Ancient days, when there was battles, and famines, and hang-fairs, and other pomps, seem to me as yesterday. Ah, many's the patriarch I've seed come and go in this parish! There, he's calling for more plates! Lord! why can't 'em turn their plates bottom upward for pudding, as we bucks used to do in former days!'"

Zealous lovers of music were the members of the old church and chapel orchestras, and the substitution of

organ and harmonium seems a sorry exchange, when it is remembered that, by their introduction, a large body of voluntary workers have been severed from any official connexion with the service of the Church. Methodist preachers of a former generation told many a humorous story about their experiences in country "meeten places." In a village chapel not far from Dorchester, the musical portion of the service used to be under the sole charge of one man, who played a flageolet with more enthusiasm than musical knowledge. Such was his appreciation of the old-fashioned tunes, that the "repeats" were multiplied till the congregation was obliged to stop singing in self-defence. One Sunday afternoon the minister gravely announced a long metre hymn; much to his dismay, the one-man orchestra began playing a common metre tune, and continued to the end of a verse, though informed of its unsuitability. At length the last note quavered, and he looked at the minister and said:

"Hey? Not goo? Then I'll mak'en goo."

On another occasion this musician allowed his thoughts to soar into futurity, a mental journey suggested by some trifling ailment. Speaking of the celestial choir and his hope of becoming a member of it, he sighed:

"Makes I want to goo up-along right to once. What times above there will be, sure! what wi' my footen

bit of music, and the ting-tang of David's harp, and all the other harpies!"

The humorous possibilities of a village orchestra were many, and the *contretemps* often mirth-provoking. Whether based on actual occurrence, or purely imaginative, the incident pictured in Mr. Thomas Hardy's story, *The Absentmindedness in a Parish Choir*, illustrates the strange contingencies which then existed. According to that sketch, Nicholas Puddingcome, the leader, and the members of the choir had been out to "one rattling randy after another every night, and had got next to no sleep at all." Sunday after Christmas came, and the Church being very cold, Nicholas brought a gallon of hot brandy and beer with him to the afternoon service. Every one in the gallery imbibed this heating beverage, and ere the clergyman reached the middle of the sermon they were all fast asleep. The discourse came to an end, the evening hymn was given out, but no sound came from the members of the choir, until they were aroused by a small boy.

"'Hey? what?' says Nicholas, starting up; and the church being so dark and his head so muddled, he thought he was at the party they had played at all the night before, and away he went, bow and fiddle, at 'The Devil among the Tailors,' the favourite jig of our neighbourhood. . . . Then Nicholas, seeing

nobody moved, shouted out as he scraped (in his usual commanding way at dances when the folk didn't know the figures), 'Top couples cross hands, and when I make the fiddle squeak at the end, every man kiss his pardner under the mistletoe.' "

CUSTOMS, SUPERSTITIONS, AND FOLKLORE

THE rare old country pastimes, which earned for our land the title of Merry England, lingered for many a day in Wessex after the Puritan attack, though the utilitarian spirit of the age has now almost extinguished them. No longer are maypoles erected, though here and there in village and town children make garlands of bluebells and cowslips, and carry them from door to door, in the hope of receiving pennies for their trouble. In only one instance within the writer's knowledge is the Harvest Home celebrated in the old-fashioned way, a country dance being the chief feature of the festivities, when a four-handed reel is performed by elderly unsmiling rustics who know the step. A reminiscence of pre-Reformation times is re-echoed from the bell in the tower of Moreton Church every Sunday morning at nine, the canonical hour of the Parish Mass. Sprigs of English willow and pieces of

yew tree are placed at the end of every seat on Palm Sunday and Good Friday respectively, and no one in the village remembers the time when this custom was not observed.

More sombre in suggestion was the occasional "wife sale," as described in *The Mayor of Casterbridge*. Perhaps this method of raising money and eluding the matrimonial yoke when it galled, existed as a survival of Danish barter, or Saxon or Norman serfdom. In any case, the origin of it was remote, and probably had its roots in heathendom, because the instances of its observance were few, and in all likelihood were reversions to primitive paganism under stress of circumstances. Height can only be fully appreciated by comparison, and it is singular to think of a young countrywoman in the brightest era of the mind's advance speaking of this outrageous custom with matter-of-fact knowledge. Such, however, was the case: a servant girl, a native of Morecombelake, explained to her mistress that the mother of one of her "young men" had been sold to a man for thirty pounds; this woman still lived in 1896.

Beautiful in its conception, though fraught with risk to its subject, was the habit of plunging new-born infants in a cold spring. There is one in the parish of Cerne Abbas, whose virtues are reputed to be wondrous, and another near Bridport, which is considered

beneficial for sore eyes. In order to derive the full benefit of the cure, the waters were resorted to when the first shaft of morning sunlight struck its surface. Akin in spirit to this custom is what seems to be a survival of votive offerings to Neptune, which still lingers in the fishing village of Langton Herring. Before the nets are taken to the beach the contents of a 7 lb. tin of biscuits are scattered on an adjacent field by the fishermen, under the impression that it will ensure a good season.

Death had its own peculiar rites, and these have obtained till a recent period. In Lulworth corpses were occasionally laid out with a penny in one hand and a little wooden hammer in the other. When a native lay a-dying, it was believed he would pass away "easier" if the doors and windows were allowed to remain open, the passage into the other world being still further smoothed when the pillows were stuffed with pigeons' feathers. It was sometimes the practice to arrange the bed of a sick person parallel with the boards, and in 1891 the bed of an aged woman at Symondsbury was removed by her rustic friends from under a beam, because "her 'll die so hard" if she remained in that position. In 1872 a boy was drowned in a stream near Sherborne, and the following expedient was resorted to in order to find the body. A piece of bread having been cut out of a loaf,

a little quicksilver was poured into the cavity, and the loaf was thrown into the river at the spot where the lad had fallen in. The loaf was expected to float down the stream until it came and paused at the place where the body had lodged, but, needless to say, it did no such thing.

Concerning marriage, many have been the curious customs observed by Wessex maidens desirous of knowing who their future husbands would be. An even ashleaf having been plucked by the love-lorn girl, it was held alternately in the hand, the glove, and the bosom, the following couplets being recited :

The even ash leaf in my hand,
The first I meet shall be my man.

The even ash leaf in my glove,
The first I meet shall be my love.

The even ash leaf in my bosom,
The first I meet will be my husband.

At midnight on Old Midsummer's Eve, the scattering of hemp seed was practised with a like object. With a rake over the left shoulder the girl would walk in the garden, and throwing the seed over her right shoulder would repeat these lines :

Hemp seed I set, hemp seed I sow,
The man that is my true love come after me now.

If the spell worked properly, it was quite expected

future husbands would instantly appear. A slight variant of this old-world custom is introduced into *The Woodlanders*. Atonement and penance are generally associated with Roman Catholic discipline, and it is unusual to find a strange penalty enforced to morally dissuade the younger members of a family from marrying before the elder. In one verified instance, where the seniors had permitted such a breach of the canons of propriety, they were compelled to dance barefooted over furze bushes placed on the floor on the day of the wedding.

There once existed a very stringent mode of disciplining those who had transgressed in their marital duties, known as "Skimmington or Skimmity Riding," which pilloried the offenders, and provided a public spectacle in places where distractions were few. The *Bridport News*, in 1884, contained an account of this primitive method of punishing sinners, in relation to the observance of it in the parish of Whitchurch Canonicorum. "About six o'clock in the evening, just as darkness began to reign, a strange noise was heard, as of the sound of trays and kettles, and it was soon found that a 'skimmity riding' was in progress, such a thing not having been known for years in this parish. Three grotesquely attired figures were to be seen escorted by a procession, consisting of persons dressed in various queer and eccentric

costumes, who paraded the parish. . . . The persons alluded to appeared to the villagers to represent three personages who were very well known to them, there being a male and two females, whose past conduct had caused them to be the subject of this queer exhibition. (These figures were dummies.) One of the females was represented as having an extraordinarily long tongue, which was tied back to the neck, whilst in one hand she held some notepaper and in the other pen and holder. . . . After their perambulations were concluded, the procession retired to a certain field where a gallows was erected, and on which the effigies were hung and afterwards burnt, having previously been saturated with some highly inflammable liquid. . . . The extraordinary proceedings terminated with a fight, in which black eyes and bloody noses were not absent." In the year of the above occurrence similar exhibitions took place at Okeford Fitzpaine and Weymouth. It will be remembered a "Skimmity Ride" was used in *The Mayor of Casterbridge* to burlesque the former relationship of Mrs. Farfrae to Henchard.

Like the creeks barred to the flow of the rising tide, there existed backwaters in the land of Wessex untouched by the advance of progressive ideas, which, in more populous districts, had done much to sweep superstition and ignorance out of existence. This lack

of knowledge was often conspicuous in the case of illness. There were two reasons why poor folk did not trouble the village doctor in any sickness save the gravest—because of the obvious expense entailed, and on account of a profound belief in traditional nostrums, either suggested by a neighbour, or sometimes devised by their own mother wit. Adders' bites were treated with the boiled fat of the reptile that had caused the injury being applied to the wound, and warts were supposed to disappear with the decay of a piece of meat buried in the ground for that purpose. Persons afflicted with scrofula often ignored the orthodox channels through which healing could be obtained, preferring to visit a "cunning man," one of whom held an annual levée known as "Toad Fair" in the neighbourhood of Stalbridge. There he sold to the large throngs gathered around him legs torn from living frogs, which, if worn next the skin in a bag, he said, cured the above-named disease. A farmer who was known to an incumbent of a village near Shaftesbury suffered much as an infant, on one occasion undergoing a trying ordeal. In obedience to a peculiar myth the nurse undressed the babe one morning at sunrise, and conveying him to a maiden ash tree split for the purpose, drew his naked body through the prongs; these were then bound up, and if adhesion between the severed parts followed, it was thought his affliction

would thereby have been removed. One of the most remarkable remedies on record sprang from the fertile brain of an old dame, who once complained to a visitor of internal pains. According to the diagnosis given, she had felt her "lights" rising in her throat, and in order to prevent them from wandering, she had swallowed a good charge of shot — "to keep 'em down" as she phrased it. Another woman who suffered from sciatica was advised to thread seven snails on a string and hang them before the fire, and as they burnt into ashes, a cure would be effected. Most of these remedies are traditional, the chief healing ingredient in them appearing to be faith.

Belief in supernatural agencies has by no means died out; reputed witches are still living in a few villages, though the villagers are loth to speak about them. In one instance occult powers are supposed to run in a family residing in a village five miles from Dorchester. In the year of grace 1901 the following remark actually fell from the lips of the old lady under consideration: "Well, as folk do say, I mid be a witch, but not such a girt one as my mother wer." It is commonly reported in this village that a gentleman once resident there, and now deceased, suffered from her malign influence. No villager cares to traverse a certain lane after nightfall, because of a jangle of chains and a clatter of hoofs, which are

commonly thought to betoken the ghost of the bewitched gentleman in question taking nocturnal exercise. The farmer to whom the remark just quoted was addressed is one of the old school, close-lipped, superstitious, and a pillar of the local chapel. One Sunday evening (towards the close of the nineteenth century), during the course of the service, he stopped in the singing of a favourite hymn. His daughter, who was playing the harmonium, noticed his unusual silence, and recognized the cause of it in the candles at her side, which had been burning unevenly, so as to make the globules of grease locally known as "coffin handles," supposed to presage death; these she instantly pinched off, and the man at once continued to praise God with renewed energy. In his younger days this farmer made a similar journey to the one undertaken by the Mayor of Casterbridge when anxious about the harvest weather, but with a different object in view. A litter of pigs had sickened, and no one could cure them, so he paid a visit to a "wise man," who informed him of an enemy who had "overlooked" the animals, and in exchange for a gratuity gave him a powder to burn in the fire when the doors were closed for the night. The formula was carried out; blue flames sprang up the chimney, insistent knocks sounded without, and in the morning the pigs were healthily active. On another occasion

when returning home from market one evening, through a meadow amid hills crowned with Celtic barrows, the old man said he heard strains of faint music, and saw the ground around him covered with battalions of phantoms, wheeling, advancing and retiring as if engaged in battle. This phenomenon cannot be dismissed as a dream brought about by free indulgence in stimulants, because the eye-witness of it has never taken alcohol in any form.

Of the malignant power of witches, a man of Winterbourne Houghton used to bear striking testimony, because he incurred the displeasure of one of the sable sisterhood, by refusing her demand for money. Instantly she cast a spell upon him, so he said, and told him he would never prosper from that time forth, and that "horses would bring him to ruin." Soon after this prophecy, one of his steeds sickened and died, the same fatality overtaking the others before the lapse of many weeks. Strange to say, disease and accident happened to every animal he bought, until at last, reduced to poverty by his losses, he could buy no more. From his garden one morning he saw his son's horse take fright and drag a load of faggots behind it down a hill. Thinking to stop the animal, he ran to its head, but only to be knocked down, the wheels of the waggon passing over his leg and severely crushing it. He lingered for some

months, but finally succumbed to his injuries, thus fulfilling the prophetic words that "horses would be his ruin." Another man who thought he was bewitched, melted a threepenny piece and made a silver bullet to shoot the dame who had "overlooked" him. Passing homeward one day, a fine hare sprang across the road, and he bemoaned the fact that he had not his bullet with him, or he would have destroyed the evil influence by killing the witch who he believed was there masquerading as a hare. Still another way of nullifying the occult potency was to draw blood from the body of the "wise woman," a method of procedure adopted by Susan Nonsuch in *The Return of the Native* when she pricked Eustacia Vye with a pin. Almost a parallel instance occurred at Winfrith, where a defenceless old dame was assaulted in the same way under the belief that her spells would be stultified.

Evil significance is read into the inopportune action of birds and beasts, such as the tapping of a bird on the window pane, and the crowing of cocks at unusual hours, the sinister suggestion of this fact being remarked upon by Dairyman Crick, on the departure of Tess and Angel Clare for their honeymoon visit to Wellbridge. The same apprehension was also expressed by a countrywoman in these terms: "If the cock do crow after twelve o'clock noon, her is

doing it to bring I bad news, or John may be bad agean. I can't a-bear to hear'n." If bees swarm on the dead branches of a tree, death is betokened by it, the untimely flowering of apple blossom having the same dire import. Fairly general is the belief in the possibility of communication—mostly in the form of visual manifestations—between the lives that are and were in the body. Notwithstanding the tendency to enlarge the restricted horizon of average experience by the expansive use of imagination, instances of strange events have been recorded and verified, and these strengthen the opinion that the generations of the living and the dead reside in the same orbit, and are sundered by spaces sometimes capable of being traversed. In Portland there is a house narrowly observed because of a supernatural episode connected with it. Here, a man in perfect health and sanity of mind awakened at midnight in the darkness, and knew that two figures were on either side of him, though he saw them not. A voice spoke, far off in tone as an echo, saying the time had come for him to depart this world. It filled him with fear; nevertheless, he managed to crave a respite, saying his spiritual condition unfitted him for any realm but an earthly one, to which the voice made answer that twelve hours' grace would be granted him. Though iron-nerved and courageous, this experi-

ence greatly troubled the man, who told a neighbour of it ere he went to work next morning. Towards noon he departed on an errand, and in due course arrived home for the dinner he never ate, for death met him in the way ere the last strokes of twelve had struck.

Fifty years ago the fireside hours in the village of Winfrith were beguiled by the repetition of rather a gruesome story, and one at least who remembers the narration of it can still feel the shiver of horror when the climax was reached.

It told how a certain villager set out for the market town one evening on business of some urgency; his wife sped him on his way, and then "hapsed" the door and retired to rest with the assurance of her husband ringing in her ears, that he would be home by noon the next day. Noon passed, and the sun had neared the horizon; in the village street stood the woman anxiously looking for the lagging man, and she continued to peer up the roadway till its white outline disappeared in the gloom. Another hour of waiting brought the darkness; suddenly she was aroused by the sound of approaching footsteps, and she went to the door and watched, but no one passed. Again she returned to her room and again recognized her husband's footfall, though the feet never came to the threshold. The sound repeatedly emerged

out of the silence and died away, till, full of dim forebodings, the woman consulted two neighbours, who went into the forsaken cottage, and listening, distinctly heard footsteps of one unseen. Then one of them retired and whispered to others who had collected; lanterns glimmered, and a search party went out into the night to follow the spectral footfall. It led them to a disused well, and the light flashing to the bottom of it revealed the distorted figure of a corpse, recognized as the man who the day before had set out for the market town.

Faith in dream warnings is very strong, and some striking proofs of their fulfilment can be adduced. For instance, a certain woman dreamt three times in one night that her husband met with an accident and cut his arm. This so impressed her that she told him of it, and ere he set out for the fields the next morning, gave him a roll of white rag "in case anything happened." After mowing grass all the morning, he and the other men sat down to their "nunch." When they had finished he related to them his wife's dream, and upon rising to continue his labour accidentally trod upon the handle of his scythe, the blade of which flew up and struck his arm, severing the radial artery and exactly fulfilling his wife's apprehensions.

Another dream must be recited, not as an example

of prophetic anticipation, but for the majesty of its conception. The woman under consideration was country bred and unlettered, whose tragic history had forced her to seek relief in laudanum. Her life had embraced a vivid religious experience. "Once," she said, "Christ Jesus knew me and grew closer to me than this," gripping the hand of one who had befriended her, "but now He will have nothing to do with the likes of me." For years her mind had been troubled by the revolution of rebellious thoughts against what she considered to be fate's unintelligible decrees, and being consumptive, the toil for bread and the attempt to keep a roof over the head of her children had sapped her vitality. When keen sensibilities are given to those who are crushed beneath the wheels of life, the philosophy distilled is sometimes appalling. This woman was sensitive enough to realize the insufficiency of her return to those who had tried to help her, and the conflict of emotions resulting from striving to do and failing to accomplish, maddened her to the point of despair. Despair, however, did not conquer her altogether, though she had expressed a wish to die, not to find a release from the load of time, but "in order that she might come back and haunt her husband for his cruelty and neglect." At periodic intervals, this woman said she felt the existence of a malign power, urging her to appease

it by some colossal sin. One night "she saw the moon through the window," and straightway committed a theft; convinced of the necessity to do an evil action, she forced herself to commit a small one to gain relief from the goad of the tempter. And it was this woman whose brain conceived the following dream. The woods were around her panoplied in sunlight, and the nuts lay scattered on the moss. Invigorated by the wine of youthful health, she leapt with the joy of life, a song upon her lips; overhead, in a pool of blue sky margined by quivering leaves, floated a lark. She stumbled on, with the merry inconsequence of childhood, and then a noise suddenly brought her to a standstill. Branches crackled, and turning to investigate the cause, the sight of it made her a world-troubled woman once more—one by one the years came back and clothed her in age and trouble. To the left a fair table was spread with unknown dainties, and roses red and white were strewn in profusion on the grass around. She saw glowing wine, sun-kissed, mellow fruits, and all the delicacies of the four seasons, but in the midst stood a bottle of laudanum. No one appeared, but a voice said: "Eat, and be satisfied." This she could not do at once, for on the right hand stood a bowed and weary figure, His countenance tender, His arms outstretched: nevertheless, she could not go with Him, because she

was hungry and exhausted, and His hands were emptily pointing to a desert, where sand wreaths whirled and wandered. Driven by want, she sat down at the table to eat, but could enjoy none of the choice foods, and looking up, she saw the Figure more bowed; then it changed to a friend, long since dead, and ere its place was fully taken by the form of another who had endeavoured to benefit her, the dream fled, and the woman awoke.

Though these imaginative fancies and superstitions testify to a presumptive ignorance, the knowledge of the schools has no radiancy in comparison with the fund of natural and supernatural lore garnered in the minds of the elder Wessexmen. Their superstitions are at one with poetry, and hint at realms beyond the zone of fact, long known to the common folk. Viewed through their eyes, the world of nature and of man is not a piece of clockwork, made by one who has lost the key, and cannot regulate its movements, neither is it an exactly scheduled collection of forces, working on animal and vegetable tissue, and developed by them from protoplasm to their present form and significance. The weariness of spent passions and the exhaustion of minds nauseated with the superficies of existence are not theirs. Life to these humble dwellers in the fragrant places of the west country is fresh and brimming as the wells

of water known to the traveller thereabout, and irradiated with mysteries and beauties of which they are somewhat conscious.

If those who read this book had known Job Samways, their recollection of his conversation and character would have vivified these pages; but as the old man is dead, and as his experiences included actual knowledge of the contraband trade of the coast, touched upon by Mr. Thomas Hardy in *The Distracted Preacher* (Wessex Tales), it is thought a short authentic sketch of the man's life will form a fitting conclusion to this portion of the study.

The Last of the Smugglers

In his latter days, the only change known to Job Samways was the Sunday change into his black coat and well oiled boots. It formed the exciting climax of the week, and glimmered through the days as a bourne to be reached, because the hours were empty of the pleasing distractions commanded by those who could read and write, and walk into the lanes at will; delights withholden from one who had never been to school, and was a cripple.

Time had written many things on his face, but the impressions were blurred, and they each warred for

mastery of expression when his wife read him anecdotes of high life from the Sunday newspaper. Sickness and penury had driven him to a town where he lived regretting the fields and meadows in a back-to-back cottage; a caged bird and a row of geraniums reminding him of the country he so passionately loved, but could never visit. Once or twice he had been able to play at gardening, and it was a pathetic sight to see him hobble about on two sticks, while his wife, Mary Samways, trundled a wheelbarrow; though, at last, even this pretence had to be renounced.

In winter Job crouched over the fire, and to appease the hunger for the active life of yore, Mary frequently brought him one or two of the old tools, a scythe and reaping hook, which he handled with loving familiarity and said:

"Show me any kind o' labouren work, and I be the man agen the young 'uns yet, if so be I'd the use o' me lags. I can put it drough shepherden, ploughen, zowen, hedgen, ditchen and tree-vellen. Hey, hey, I could do all they things till the cows do come home! But I can't walk, can I, mother?" and he would turn to his wife, and attempt to rise.

"Of course you can't, dad; how zilly you be!" Then, to mollify him, Mary would say he was "a rare old spark to once among the maidens at the feasts," or would ask him to tell well known stories of his

early days, "if his poor mortal body would 'low of it."

"Go on, mother," he muttered, showing his gums; "I shall be all right when the zun do shine both zides of the hedges agen."

Further persuasion having been brought to bear on his seeming unreadiness to speak, Job notified his intention of doing so by feebly slapping the table.

"Before I wer long out of me clouts I wer playen with a hook in the hedges, a-hetten the stangen-nettles to pieces, and loppen off the heads of the gil-cups. Then I did goo out to service to a farm near Winfrut, and did have to stand on a milken stool to groom the 'osses. Plentiful supply of company did the farmer keep, and I wer about sometimes to dree in the marnen avore I could hapse the stable door—they got so drinky in the house and forgot the moments. Not but what light liquor be good for man in the field, where 'ee can zweat it out faster'n he can put it in. Well, as I wer sayen——" and the old man paused in exhaustion, and rifled his large pockets in search of a match to light his pipe.

"But they smugglen ventures—you mind those stirren times, and what a figure of might you did cut?" Mary would plead if a friend were present and waiting to hear these reminiscences. But more often than not Job had not the strength to continue a

story just begun, and a lucid narrative could only be obtained by piecing together the fragments heard at odd intervals, either from him or his wife.

It appeared that as a youth on a coast farm Job Samways used to earn extra money by helping other enterprising lads to elude the customs. The emoluments of a successful undertaking were considerable, the thankful glee of the smugglers sometimes taking the form of a convivial evening at a tavern, when watches were occasionally fried to demonstrate the careless wealth of the owners. Frequently kegs of spirits were stored in a cave near White Nose Point, and it often fell to the lot of Job to be lowered at night down the edge of the cliff, in order to attach a rope to the barrels, which were then drawn to the top. There they were packed into waggons, the wheels being muffled with felt, and carted inland.

On a certain dark night, the preventive men, as coastguards were then called, had been lured to another part of the coast, so that a cargo could be safely landed in a quiet creek two miles in the opposite direction. The smugglers descended to the shore, and each man took a keg and panted with it to the top of the slope; ere the journey was finished, however, a pistol shot rang out, the curtaining clouds fell away from the moon and disclosed a party of advancing coastguards.

At this point in the narrative the old man invariably got excited, and his wife would say :

" Ah, dad, that brings us to your girt ingenity."

Shots whizzed over the head of young Job, and presently one pierced his keg, and the liquor flowed. Anxious to save the precious liquid he drew a cork from his pocket, bunged the hole, and succeeded in getting away with his valuable load !

" Lawk, to think of they times of strife and awfulness," ejaculated Mary, dropping a stocking she always seemed to be knitting of an evening. " Now tell us the bit about the chap who was shotted."

But before the old man could get launched into this episode she frequently narrated the story herself, he nodding portentous approval from his corner. It told how the only son of a widow persisted in remaining a smuggler, despite his mother's anxious opposition. One day he hinted at an exploit in which he was interested, and this so incensed the woman that she thoughtlessly expressed a hope that he would be killed in the venture. In manner subdued he thereupon walked into the garden, cut his name on a tree there standing, and led by a sense of impending doom, bought some white ribbon and flowers, which he gave to four maidens, who wonderingly consented to walk in his funeral. The same night he was shot in an engagement with preventive

men, and the impulsive wish of the widow was fulfilled.

"And so it fell out to my good knowen," the old man always added, when the story came to an end.

Now and again memories of his experiences as a carter would tremble on his tongue, prefaced by the remark: "I know'd 'osses since me cradlehood," and it would be told how he turned his waggon into a field, to allow the stage coach to swing by along the road; how he had been molested by three men with blackened faces, and how he encountered them by a stream, knocked them down, and washing away the charcoal, recognized them as old workmates. Of Job's kindness to little children and those in sorry plights, and his generous inability to keep a few pounds for rainy days, only his wife spoke. And then perhaps to forget what might have been, she would break forth enthusiastically:

"And the farmers knew the valie of Job Sawyers always, didden they, dad?"

"Ees, ees, mother"—and the old man smiled benignly. "Many's the time I wer a-sent for to take charge o' the shearen, 'cos I tooked a medal for it to Dochester. And the farmers 'ood zend for I to counsel 'em about the planten of a bit of land. They did know my wise old way—I jist tastied the soil and told 'em the nature of it, han'-pat. Sure I did!" Then his

lips would be convulsed with reminiscence, and he would grate the legs of the chair against the "stwonen floor," in a futile endeavour to rise.

Concerning the life only fully known to himself, Job usually maintained a modest silence, and it was Mary who volunteered the statement that he "wer a rare meetener," and it was she only who spoke of the lonely wanderings to which he had been driven by the death of his first wife, aimless journeys with their nights spent in the open, and the memories of a home made only to be destroyed. His own words proved him to have been alive to the beauty of the early mornings, when the dewy corn, just cut, fell into his arms like "long clothes babies," and the stream fled through the near meadow with the sun drift on it, and earth and air were glad with the song of birds.

Then the tyranny of pain asserted its dominion over the old man, and the collapse induced by an earlier accident came upon him. But no persuasion could keep Job in bed in the upper room, where each morning he was dressed by his wife, and taken to the foot of the winding stairs. Here he would sit awhile panting, and descend with infinite difficulty, depositing himself on stair after stair, only to stay there in agony till the evening, when a stalwart neighbour carried him to bed.

Speech failed him, save for the day-long cry of

"mother, mother." Slipping beyond the reach of friends, Job's hand now often waved invitingly to a table where a Bible rested on a woollen mat, and the consolations no human heart could administer were found by him in these words:

"He that entereth in by the door, is the shepherd of the sheep: to him the porter openeth, and the sheep hear his voice, and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when he putteth forth his own sheep he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice; and a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him, for they know not the voice of strangers."

This picture brought quietude to the troubled features. It reminded the old man of the joy of his shepherding days; how the sheep answered to his voice; how at night time he stepped between their prostrate forms without frightening them; how in winter nights amid storms of snow he had sought and found them beneath heavy drifts, how he had sheared and washed them, attended to their wounds, and carried their young in his arms.

And the day came when the friends who visited Job Samways retired without being recognized. On the night after he had dreamed of angels in an interval of pain, he soon entered the hour, when, for the last time, he heard the words: "The Lord is my Shepherd,

I shall not want." Ere the clock of the town church again rang out, one whose sole earthly regret had been his severance from the country, passed to the comfort of the green pastures and still waters spoken of by the Hebrew singer.

THOMAS HARDY

IN the case of several modern novelists, the incidence of their birthplace has no particular literary significance in relation to their work; they are citizens of the world, hungering after new backgrounds—seekers after spectacular novelties, roving commissioners in search of sensations. Let none of these novelist-reporters think that a few months' residence in Wessex will enable them to gauge its heart and mirror its life in stories, long or short. Behind all knowledge and fact that can be gleaned by the industrious, is the necessity for the possession of an inherited quality—that racial sympathy, attachment and intuitive insight which no one but a son of the soil can ever hope to intimately realize. Possessing these hereditary instincts to the full, Mr. Hardy has found in them uncommon sources of inspiration. If there be any truth in the belief that long residence in a district begets an occult relationship between the soil and the men born on it, then the Wessex

novelist affords a proof of the theory, because the name of Hardy is a common one in Dorset; frequently found in the annals of the county, there is scarcely a town or village in the district, without a representative of this name.

In considering Mr. Hardy's literary work in relation to the formative environment of youth, there seems to be fine poetic fitness in his birthplace, Upper Bockhampton, near Dorchester, where he first saw the light on June 2, 1840. In country parlance, it is an outstep spot, difficult of access even to those who know the neighbourhood. The walk thither from the market-town, in spring or summer, is delightful to those who love the green pageantry of Nature. Just a narrow track across a meadow is taken, and the doors of the modern world swing to their closing, and an entrance is gained into a region where life is hushed by the sway and tremble of leaves, mirrored in a stream that seldom breaks the garment of stillness by a liquid rush or fall.

Breathing that sense of detachment which is the spirit of the scene, the wayfarer along this by-way is forcibly reminded of the agony of Tess, when she saw an itinerant pietist painting the seventh commandment on a barn-door. Conspicuously daubed on a wicket gate, is this warning to all who pass by: "Woe unto the wicked; it shall be ill with him,"

and the mind that has found a temporary refuge from problems and sorrows is goaded out of a realm of healing quietude. Side by side river and tiny pathway wander on beneath the shadow of the glade, whitely stained here and there by the sunlight, and breathed upon all the way by delicate perfumes, the fragrant souls of fields and gardens. Footway and waterway in tranquil companionship lead to the hamlet of Lower Bockhampton, where they once more emerge from their sylvan cloister.

Here, it may chance a haggler is driving his trade with a cottager, and a lift in his cart along the road to the sister hamlet, is a happy experience, because by it the wayfarer becomes acquainted with one who is intimate with the light and shadow of rural life. Seated in front of an assortment of cheap crockery, the haggler cheerfully discusses his trade among the villagers, and dwells upon its decline, consequent upon the women being too "taffety" to buy the homely wares affected by their parents. Here was an obscure man who had just heard of Mr. Hardy, but he scarcely knew in what way the eminent author had signalized himself, though he knew where the family had lived, and jerked his whip in the direction. Having travelled the number of miles indicated by a peasant's "five minutes' walk," no hamlet is seen till a by-path is pointed out. This sheers down a declivity to a handful

of cottages, not sufficient in number to demand either a church, post office, or tavern. Upper Bockhampton is but the germ of a village, and continues to this day, in point of dimensions, in a state of unambitious infancy, bespeaking the first primitive needs of human nature without any visible hint of sophisticated desires. The cottage home is there seen in its typical simplicity—the living-room stone-flagged, the ceiling cross-beamed, the chimney spacious, with a fire of wood on the hearth enclosed by uncemented bricks. The hamlet itself sleeps on the confines of Thorneycombe Wood, skirting Bockhampton Heath, similar in character to weird Egdon, clothed in well-nigh immortal vegetation. Embosomed in this solitude is the picturesque house where Mr. Thomas Hardy was born, and where his childhood's days were saturated with rural peace and glamour. A more favourable environment for one who was to win reputation chiefly on account of his studies of rustic life, cannot be imagined, and if first impressions are the most valuable ones to a writer, it was in this neighbourhood his brain was steeped with those elements which have made so vivid an impression on the public mind.

The formative influences of Mr. Hardy's childhood and youth in their main characteristics were grandly simple: the passage of the wind through the trees that almost touched his home; the soft filtering of



EGDON HEATH

Photo by Mace, Weymouth

the breeze in summer, and the roar of the tempest in winter, sounds capable of breeding in the mind of an imaginative child vague conceptions of a power aloof from human nature, and inimical to it. The woods would introduce him at once into the elusive mysteries of the woodland, the habits of the winged and four-footed creatures, and the hints of knowledge imparted by the peasantry would be developed by observation, and made fruitful by reflection. The dialect of the county was learnt ere the progress of education, the diffusion of cheap literature, and the movement of the country town-wards, had set a conventional stamp upon it, and doubtless, in after years, the picturesque folk-tongue recalled the presence and actual gait of those who used it in its purity. A healthy curiosity would have led him to inquire into methods of farming, the use of tools and implements used in agriculture, while doubtless the folk-tales he heard were received with youth's avidity for the marvellous. What the mind loves to receive it can easily remember, and the natural lore and gossip of the countryside must have been accepted and treasured, without effort or knowledge of the intrinsic value of such impressions.

Around him the cycle of the seasons rolled their panorama, and, suckled at the heart of Nature, he felt its pulsations of renewed being, and the ebb of energies when the branches clattered in late autumn.

Life unfolded its array of pastoral comedy and tragedy year by year before his eyes, until his mind grew equal to their meaning, and extracted the rudiments of a sombre philosophy from them. Doubtless, the susceptible nature of the artist within him would have been touched to melancholy by the lapse from change to change, nowhere so noticeable as in the country, and the presence of this endless mutation in its reaction on the mind, might well beget a sense of the impermanence of all things human. The significance of the weather must have loomed within him as of cardinal importance, and untimely rains and long periods of drought, would have provided a sententious youth with much food for thought, especially in their relation to Providential oversight, orthodox conceptions of the Omnipotent rule, and the farmers who were forced to bow to it. Nature in its reaction on human nature can be grim; crops and harvests fail, springs run dry, purses are depleted, and minds depressed with foreboding. The periods of gloom arising from these causes were far more pronounced in the early days of Mr. Hardy's life than they are in these days of a plenitude of foreign corn, and a mind sensitive to delicate impressions would have been influenced by the cloud. "The thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts," especially when they animate the brain of a youthful genius, and it is only natural to assume

that the misfortunes and problems incident to rural life were pondered by the future novelist.

Though that extravagant candour alleged against Mr. Hardy's treatment of sex is but another example of his fearlessly unconventional attitude to life in general, the native frankness of the peasantry, in relation to the same question, has probably influenced the point of view of one born in their midst, and whose observation of their idiosyncrasies amounted to a splendid hobby in after years.

Ere taking the first step into the world, Mr. Hardy must have been conscious that the brilliant tapestries of homely life, entwined as they were with customs quaint and antique manners, would fade and wear dim, and the very love engendered by this knowledge would foster a desire to breathe into them the spirit of life, and maintain a picture of them in some fadeless medium. In his seventeenth year Mr. Hardy was articled to Mr. Hicks, an ecclesiastical architect of Dorchester, to whom the restoration of many of the old South Dorset churches was entrusted, work which resulted in the future novelist being sent on many a roving errand about the county. The professional training here begun was one of his most potent formative influences, and has been the means, more or less, of affecting the colour and design of all the Wessex novels. It is not unusual for a young

novelist to go to his own business when he wishes to start one of his fictitious characters in a career, because knowledge of some sort is the foundation of all imaginative work. The broadening influence of maturity and riper views, often lead a novelist, as he grows older, to rely less on actual experience, and more on intuitive comprehension of other spheres, when he comes to choose careers for his heroes, perhaps because the possibilities attending the line of life he himself first adopted have been exhausted, and perhaps because he has found self-detachment from his own past a necessary condition for the creation of characters distinct and wide in their range and conception.

Therefore, it is not surprising to find two architects, Owen Graye and Edward Springrove, in Mr. Hardy's first novel, *Desperate Remedies*, though it is a cause for wonder when the same profession is introduced into *A Pair of Blue Eyes* and *The Laodicean* in the persons of Stephen Smith and George Somerset respectively. Certainly, from the point of view of a novelist, the openings provided by characters moving in the milieu of a peripatetic profession, would, in themselves, be very fruitful of developments, especially if the writer himself had trodden the same path, and thus proved the possibilities of it. Some readers of the Wessex novels may cavil at the insistence of the architect's point of view, and find fault with the

detailed treatment of buildings, but it is only referred to here as a proof of the personal note in works of a distinctly impersonal type. *A Pair of Blue Eyes* illustrates the artistic use of material probably gathered for technical purposes, dealing as it does with "the craze for indiscriminate church restoration," and the lives of the people associated with the attempt to rehabilitate a sacred edifice. A better example is found in *The Laodicean*, where George Somerset and Havill are deputed by Paula Power to renovate Castle Stancy. At the opening of the theme, this historic mansion is broadly sketched from the outside: "The castle was not exceptionally large, but it had all the characteristics of its more important fellows. Irregular, dilapidated, and muffled in creepers as a great portion of it was, some part—a comparatively modern wing—was inhabited. . . . Over all rose the keep, a square, solid tower apparently not much injured by wars or weather, and darkened with ivy on one side, wherein wings could be held flapping uncertainly. . . . In spite of the habitable and more modern wing, neglect and decay had set their mark upon the outworks of the pile, unfitting them for a more positive light than that of the present hour." This is only a preliminary sketch in the presentation of the fine old building, whose interior is then minutely examined, described, and criticised with fine enthusiasm, the differences

of opinion between Somerset and Havill suggesting actual experience of the conservatively inclined in this domain of work. All the capacity of an architect is utilized in the treatment of Castle Stancy, but it is lifted out of the dead region of technical comment by the power of the artist, which has animated the castle with a personality of its own. Further, the capacities brought into play by an architect's training are observable in the harmonious construction of the Wessex novels, the infinite detail being used with fine proportionate sense, and subordinated to the main structural themes without any undue emphasis of the subsidiary parts.

Notwithstanding the claims of his profession, architecture did not absorb all Mr. Hardy's energies, even while he was engaged with Mr. Hicks at Dorchester, for side by side with it he carried on a careful study of poetry and literature, chiefly in the departments of classics and theology. In his twentieth year, Mr. Hardy went to London and attached himself to the modern Gothic School, working under the eminent architect and painter, Sir Arthur Blomfield, entering himself at the same time as a student of modern languages at King's College. While resident in London he helped in the restoration of several churches in the neighbourhood, but the influence of Sir Arthur Blomfield as a painter probably fostered his love of art

more forcibly than his inclinations in design. The prize and medal of the Institute of British Architects was awarded him in 1863, for an essay on "Coloured Brick and Terra-cotta Architecture," and in the same year he received Sir. W. Tate's prize for architectural design, a proof that signal successes would have been his in this career had he adopted it. Several remarkable poems were also written during this period, a form of expression which, judging by a recent utterance, has always exercised a great fascination over him. His first published article, "How I built myself a House," appeared without a signature in *Chambers' Magazine*, March 18, 1865, and by a strange coincidence the first published work of George Meredith appeared in the same magazine. In the October (1901) number of the *International*, Mr. Edmund Gosse wrote as follows concerning the Wessex novelist's first attempt at fiction:

"On the best authority I am informed that the first novel Mr. Hardy wrote has never been published and will never see the light. The name of it was *The Poor Man and the Lady*, and it was full of the revolutionary and anti-social extravagances which are native to the unripeness of a youth of genius. It happened by a strange and interesting coincidence that the 'reader' for the publisher to whom his manuscript was submitted happened to be no less a

person than Mr. Meredith. He saw the rough power in the book, and he recommended it for publication. But he also sent for the young man, and with great courtesy and friendliness urged him to consider whether it would not be wise to adopt, on his first introduction to the public, a gentler guise. The result was that Mr. Hardy asked leave to suppress *The Poor Man and the Lady*, and retired to write *Desperate Remedies*."

After winning Sir W. Tate's prize, it is said Mr. Hardy's intention was then to become an art critic; but the publication of *Desperate Remedies* by Messrs. Tinsley, in 1871, shaped his destiny otherwise. Proof of this early inclination towards art, is found in the pictorial treatment of scenery, and in the habit of borrowing impressions from painters to illuminate characters and moods, a method which sets the average reader at a disadvantage, because often he does not possess sufficient knowledge of the pictures quoted to visualize the analogies drawn from them. Clare's view of life after the dramatic confession by Tess is thus described: "Nevertheless, humanity stood before him no longer in the pensive sweetness of Italian art, but in the staring and ghastly attitudes of a Wiertz museum, and with the leer of a study by Van Beers." Similes borrowed from the canvasses of artists abound in the description of women, their appearance and pose, but as only a small minority can base a lucid

image on such likenesses, the conceptions conveyed where this allusive method is adopted are apt to be dim to the mind of the inartistic reader. It is evidently an instance of the interference of personal taste with the instinct for perfect lucidity of expression, though the significance of it is small, in comparison with the magnificent studies of Nature that have grown out of the faculty to see with the trained vision of the artist. Even a random turn of the pages reveals many gems. Spring is vividly impressed upon the sense in this brilliant miniature: "The season developed and matured. Another year's instalment of flowers, leaves, nightingales, and such ephemeral creatures took up their positions where only a year ago others had stood in their place, when these were nothing more than germs and inorganic particles. Rays from the sunrise drew forth the buds and stretched them into long stalks, lifted up sap in noiseless streams, opened petals, and sucked out scents in invisible jets and breathings." And who can forget the desolate heath of Egdon, when it is painted in this wise: "The spot was, indeed, a near relation of night, and when night showed itself, an apparent tendency to gravitate together could be perceived in its shades and the scene. The sombre stretch of rounds and hollows seemed to rise and meet the evening gloom in pure sympathy, the heath exhaling dark-

ness as rapidly as the heavens precipitated it. . . . The place became full of a watchful intentness now; for when other things sank brooding to sleep the heath appeared slowly to awake and listen. Every night its Titanic form seemed to await something, but it had waited thus unmoved during so many centuries, through the crisis of so many things, that it could only be imagined to await one last crisis, the final overthrow. . . . As with some persons who have long lived their lives apart, solitude seemed to look out of its countenance. It had a lonely face, suggesting tragical possibilities."

The final choice between architecture and literature was made in 1874, the year of Mr. Hardy's marriage to Miss Emma Lavinia Gifford, and a year made memorable to students of literature by the anonymous appearance of *Far from the Madding Crowd* in the *Cornhill Magazine.* At last Mr. Hardy must have realized, if he had not done so already, the literary value of his countryside, and his own ability to give it fit and adequate expression. Beyond steady progress in the art of fiction, and the periodic proof of it in the series of novels which came from his pen, his life has been lacking in those dramatic incidents, which so often make eminent men of letters the cynosure for the wondering gaze of the public. Ever characterised by reserve, as praiseworthy as it

is noticeable in times of unblushing publicity—unattached to literary cliques, and indifferent to the popular cults of the hour, Mr. Hardy has remained true to his art instincts with marked fidelity to the land of Wessex. Before taking up their residence in Dorchester Mr. and Mrs. Hardy lived at Riverside, Sturminster Newton — the "Stourcastle" of the novels—and then at Wimborne, and finally settled at "Max Gate" in 1885.

A critical examination of the Wessex novels reveals the dominance of a wide and almost tragic curiosity —not the small and inquisitive interest of a reporter— but the large-viewed inquiry of a philosopher, who is also gifted with the poet's insight and vision. Usually it is only the few in every generation that can be enthralled by the average, the commonplace, and the oft-recurring phenomena of life. Mr. Thomas Hardy belongs to the select company of thinkers, poets and novelists who are born anew into the world every day; their vision is not clouded and jaded by habit, but is fresh, pristine, and alert to mark and worshippingly comprehend the variation of appearances. The *blasé* view of life can never enrich literature; it may produce brilliant trifles, smart *vers de société*, clever novels limp with shoddy sentiment, or bristling with cheap satire, but lacking in elemental zests, it can never truly incarnate life in any lasting

medium. To the portrayal of rural character, especially, Mr. Hardy brought to bear this faculty of zest, allied to acute insight and sympathetic comprehension, with the result that these homely folk can be likened not unfavourably to the Shakespearian creations of a similar order.

The slow production of the Wessex novels demonstrates an habitual reliance on spontaneity and a willingness on the part of the author to await the disturbance of his mind by strong creative impulse. The generality of English magazines never have the chance of publishing even short stories from his pen, notwithstanding the tempting baits in point of remuneration and advertisement. Chinese massacres do not prompt him to produce mythical tales of Pekin, or the recurrent fears of Roman Catholic supremacy, to write fictional tracts on the superiority of Protestant beliefs and peoples.

It has sometimes been the custom to compare Mr. Hardy with George Eliot and Hawthorne, but though the work of each is characterised by peculiar power, the adoption of the comparative method in this case is unreliable and bewildering. Botanists may detect similarities between roses and daffodils, but the lover of flowers is content to accept and admire each for its respective beauty alone. Time and place mark off these writers into distinct genera, and little

illumination is gained by the discovery of apparent or actual resemblances. The Wessex novelist cannot be classed with the readiness that pleases the compiler of manuals of literature, for his mind revolves in an orbit that is intersected by scarcely any other living writer. As an absolute insularity from the atmosphere of the age in which he has lived would have been impossible, the student of the novels will discover the influences of later Victorian philosophies and theories, both decadent and scientific. These are moulded and expressed in new forms, for above every other quality Mr. Hardy is a thinker, who uses the soil of current thought for the growth of his own ideas, and these are never whittled down to conformity with popular views.

In any attempt to assay the spirit and quality which inform the Wessex novels, and especially the later ones of the series, the critic is at once confronted with the vexed question of the true function of art. Whether methods of fine discrimination and reserve in relation to evil, should prevail, or methods of absolute and impersonal revelation, is the issue between the two schools. Typical examples are found in Zola, the unflinching photographer whose art is unmoral and embracive, and Barrie, the idealist, whose art is tenderly selective. No newspaper of good repute will publish a verbatim report of the Divorce Court,

and in this policy of healthy reticence the editors of these journals day by day discountenance the theory of absolute frankness in relation to all the facts of life, and their testimony as men of ability and culture is weighty. The inter-play of vice and virtue, the opposition, or renunciation to the one and the efforts to gain the other, helped and hindered in their scope and power by the force and quality of love, provide the novelist with his material. Those who put art beyond the sphere of morality, and claim absolute licence of expression, make truth their watchword; those who emphasize the goodliness of mankind, and make no microscopic study of vice, also recognize the supremacy of truth, but assert that reticence in the delineation of moral deformity is a paramount duty. Without wishing to dogmatize on such a subtle question, it may be laid down as an opinion, that where a writer's conception of art interferes with his duty to the community—a duty that involves the nicest consideration of the weak—he should forbear to paint and diagnose moral obliquities with a fidelity to truth which gives offence to the simple, and evil momentum to the viciously inclined.

Mr. Hardy's conception of life is of the sombre tinge that gravitates towards the facts that wring the heart, and depress the mind. A keynote of his philosophy is found in part of a description of

Blackmore Vale in *The Woodlanders*, where it states: "Here, as everywhere, the Unfulfilled Intention, which makes life what it is, was as obvious as it could be among the depraved crowds of a city slum. The leaf was deformed, the curve was crippled, the taper was interrupted; the lichen ate the vigour of the stalk, and the ivy slowly strangled to death the promising sapling." Most of the characters who move through the Wessex novels are conceived in harmony with this sunless view of existence; Eustacia, the shuttlecock of the emotions, is drowned; Viviette is baulked of her husband's love, and Henchard is hunted to death by misfortune. Life as a punishment inflicted by an undiscriminating hand seems to be Mr. Hardy's reading of the riddle of existence, a conclusion sadly in accord with a volume of modern thought.

The heat and intensity of the Wessex novels form a striking contrast to the quietude in which they were engendered — even woodlands, streams and meadows, and the paths wandering among them are penetrated with moods and emotions. This subjective view of Nature is exemplified in the following passage: "The physiognomy of a deserted highway expresses solitude to a degree that is not reached by mere dales or downs, and bespeaks a tomblike stillness more emphatic than that of glades and pools. The contrast of what is with what might be probably

accounts for this. To step, for instance, at the point under notice, from the edge of the plantation into the adjoining thoroughfare, and pause amid its emptiness for a moment, was to exchange, by the act of a single stride, the simple absence of human companionship for an incubus of the forlorn."

There are few periods of repose in these studies of the development of elemental passion and few glimpses of divinity in man or woman. Were the soul the figment of a dreamer's brain there would be no ground for the charge of omitting spiritual evolution, but if the soul is the great reality of life, and its potentiality the foundation of hope, faith, and true nobility, works of fiction that do not depict the possible victories of the spirit, are open to criticism as great and complete pictures of existence.

The decadence of healthy belief, the subjection of all things to scientific investigation, and the morbid pathology of the last thirty years, have set their stamp on Mr. Hardy's work. Depressing demonstration of them is found in *Jude the Obscure*, a book regretted by many admirers because of instances of an almost repellent finesse in the treatment of human relationships, and the absence of those quaint homespun worthies who have brightened so many of the other books. The sinister disabilities of life are emphasized, though humour, and the fancy to which it is allied,

plays hide-and-seek among the grimmest network of events. The explosion of new ideas and their expansion in the web of habit, the complexities and possibilities of matrimonial divergence developed through mazes of entanglement, the inter-action of Nature on life, and the assertion of primitive passions—all these elements are presented with intensest sincerity. Notwithstanding the intellectual quality of Mr. Hardy's genius, its manifestations have been unexpected, and cannot be anticipated. The beautiful idyll of *Under the Greenwood Tree*, undisturbed by the boom of tragic notes, was followed by *A Pair of Blue Eyes*, sophisticated, tragic, and unreposeful, and several years later by that study of virginal womanhood on the rack of misfortune, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*. There is intricate plot and simplicity of construction, as in *Desperate Remedies* and *Two on a Tower*—instances of a range of power that is amazing.

In the writer's portrait gallery the same wide range of comprehension is observable; side by side there are the Wessex men and women—the simple, morbid, fantastic, sweet, gentle, and the rebel. Certain characters in the novels emerge from the mist of memory with a strong sense of actuality clinging to them. The impact of Henchard's tempestuous nature can almost be felt; Christian Cantle, "the man of mournfullest make," and Grandfer Cantle, "the

playward old man"; hale Tranter Dewy, the victim of plentiful perspiration, and sweet Fancy; Bob and John Loveday, Angel Clare, Alec D'Urberville, Betty Dornell, Giles Winterborne, Elfride, and poor Tess — all these men and women cannot be forgotten. Between Mr. Hardy's minute analyses and the actions of the characters there is nearly always a faithful correspondence, though the heroes who are architects, and the conventional London folks, fail to convey the sense of reality that inspires the finer rustic creations. The Wessex novels reveal a strong predilection for depicting subtle characters—the minds and natures of gossamer finesse and malleability that respond to delicate influences and impressions. Light is shed on the recesses of hearts bewildered by their own involutions, and rudderless creatures, who seem to be ricochetted by whim and passion through a world of chance. Most of the villains in the Wessex novels are slaves to sense, though the only sensualist, pure and simple, is Alec D'Urberville, who is a slave to the brute instinct. The other villains are saved from being classed in this category by the possession of redemptive qualities, such as some intellectual or physical endowment, or charm of manner. Fitzpiers has points of resemblance with Angel Clare; both are delicately fibred men, but the grossness in Fitzpiers is the cause

of conduct impossible to Clare, and brings him to the verge of villainy. Sergeant Troy, who is surcharged with crude sentiment out of proportion to intellect, and Manston, who is partly redeemed by brains, are convincing types of the riotous blooded.

The attitude of the average woman of culture to the women portrayed by Mr. Hardy is, generally speaking, either one of armed neutrality or definite dislike. Allowing, however, the fullest weight to this resentment, there remains a sufficient residue of disregard in the minds of many women to warrant the opinion that it suggests some fundamental defect in Mr. Hardy's conception of womanhood. There are women, capricious, petulant, perverse, morbid, patient, and full of restraint, such as Elfride, Ethelberta, Bathsheba, Felice, Viviette, with their humble sisters, Marty South, Elizabeth-Jane and Charlotte, but among them all the feminine critics notify and deplore a lack of the more spirituelle of womanly characteristics. The issues raised by this objection must be left an open question, because of the possibilities hinted at by Coventry Patmore when he declared woman to be "a foreign country," where little can be anticipated, and less dogmatized upon.

Didactic intention of a pronounced kind is rarely found in art in its highest form; not seldom it has the impersonality of life itself, majestic indifference

to the range of the significance embalmed by it, allied to a sense of sublime irresponsibility. Lessons helpful to rightful doing and thinking may be derived from its contemplation, instanced by the incitement to fortitude and a stoical acceptance of all the facts of life found in the Wessex novels. Nevertheless, the genius behind the creation was neither moral nor immoral, but as neuter and abstract in intent as the stream when it reflects the twinkling leaves. If the work of Mr. Hardy be approached from this standpoint, there is no ground for any allegation against it, and a wider scope is gained for admiration. If, however, it is believed that art should solely emphasize the things of noble and good report in human nature, and subject itself to those rigid limitations in the treatment of evil, demanded by traditional seemliness, and a knowledge that wayward inclinations gain momentum by the disregard of those limitations, the excess of frankness in the delineation of human relationships which characterizes some of the Wessex novels must be condemned, and the absence of spirituality shown in its evolution in human character deplored.

SOME COMMENTS ON THE POEMS

THE most recent utterance of Mr. Hardy has been a poetic one—*Poems of the Past and the Present*—which, in many respects, forms a companion volume to *Wessex Poems*. The pieces collected and published in the November of 1901 were written at various dates, and though the preface states they "will probably be found, therefore, to possess little cohesion of thought or harmony of colouring," the stark point of view revealed unites them to the main body of Mr. Hardy's work. Albeit, this Wessex world of human nature is racked by every variety of tragic disquietude, a dignity of grief almost classic in its repose is maintained. From the first page to the last, *Poems of the Past and the Present* provide momentously austere illustrations of the idea that the capacities that make for happiness are undergoing a process of denudation. Examples of pessimistic thought can be found in most poets, but few, if any of them, have maintained the grey note so uninterruptedly, nor risen into such

altitudes of disillusioned intensity. Some explanation of this prevalent melancholy seems to be suggested in "A Commonplace Day," which hints at the apprehension of greatly intentioned purposes for the world's amendment—

"But which, benumbed at birth
By momentary chance or wile, has missed its hope to be
Embodied on the earth;
And undervoicings of this loss to man's futurity
May wake regret in me."[2]

The miscellaneous poems appeal to a wider constituency than that generally addressed by the modern poet, for they contain the revelation of a well-known thinker's attitude to the unpalliated facts of life. Though the world is thirsting for cheerful affirmations, Mr. Hardy cannot, in all his philosophy, provide it with optimistic assurances. Benefits are heaped upon the intellect, but the heart is unfed, lacerated and appalled, as in "The Church-Builder" and the ironic "Bed-ridden Peasant to an Unknowing God." Searching for ultimate truth, and finding it not, life has been scrutinized till perception has been trained to pierce and penetrate appearances in lightning flashes of comprehension, and the thoughts engendered are packed into tense lines that sear the mind with their conclusions. The future is questioned, and the Mother apostrophized thus :—

"Wilt thou destroy, in one wild shock of shame,
Thy whole high-heaving firmamental frame,
Or patiently adjust, amend and heal?"

And the question is unanswered, save for indications and anticipations of the wrecking spite of chance and deforming circumstance. Man is ever being robbed and ill-treated, and the forces that misuse him are slaves to a greater power.

Lovers of Wessex may be curious about the little known tract of country, Waddon Vale, referred to at the head of the poem entitled "The Lacking Sense." This valley, which extends in a south-westerly direction, with Upwey at one end and Abbotsbury at the other, has been only casually alluded to in the Wessex novels, and the secrets of its seclusion are yet to be told. Not many years since, the iron nerve of civilization shot along the whole length of Waddon Vale, spreading innovation and bridging the remoteness that, till the existence of the railway, divided the hamlets from the more populous parts of the district. Passing to and fro, the iron shuttle of traffic subtly interwove the rural with the urban, and thus the simple polity of the valley absorbed the line into the fibres of its own constitution. The needs of the valley do not demand a Sunday service of trains in winter, when the ancient hillsides are sacred to the tread of the shepherd. Then the wayside villages are hugged

by the solitude; the harsh heritage of labour is the circumscribing idea when the inquisitorial stare of the summer stranger is only a memory, too dim to distract the mind from the monotonous facts of every-day life.

Though an integral part of a great railway system, the officials on this tiny branch line surprise the seasoned traveller by their charming humanity. In place of the smart human machines who collect tickets at busy junctions, and hastily chop directions at a great station, are individuals who are men, and railway servants as a casual after-thought. So infrequently do trains arrive at the noiseless terminus, that the officials seem to deprecate such an intrusion upon a placid existence. So sparse is the traffic that each passenger is generally known to the guard, whose anxieties as a man increase with the diminution of his responsibilities as an official. When clients are also acquaintances, and their number is small enough to have some personal knowledge of all of them, it is hard for a humane man not to be solicitous about the absence of Amos H——, the dairyman, or another, who so regularly takes his butter and eggs to Dorchester market. Inquiry at the junction allays the fears of the kindly railway man, for there will be at least six wholesome cheeked people who will be able to tell him about the particular malady,

minor or major, which accounts for the defection of the absentee. So with the porters whose curiosity has not been destroyed by a plethora of luggage; to them, travellers are not abstractions attached to certain cumbrous realities, but romantically interesting persons, whose belongings must be handled with some amount of reverent attention. Indeed, summer or winter, travel on this line enriches the observant mind, and sweetens the heart with those simple little amenities that give a pleasant flavour to meditation.

Sleepy Hollow is Waddon Vale in summer, when the length of it seems a-quiver with the adoration of the sun, and the train glides so slowly that it seems apprehensive of disturbing the dozing fields and heat-drenched hills. Viewed from the chalk-scarred summit, the treeless valley, intersected as it is by dense criss-cross hedges, appears like a Titanic patchwork quilt, long ago laid as a mantle over the resting-place of a god who reigned in some heathen mythology. Changeful in expression as a human countenance is the valley thus apostrophized:—

"O Time, whence comes the Mother's moody look amid her labours,
As of one who all unwittingly has wounded where she loves?
Why weaves she not her world-webs to according lutes and tabors,
With nevermore this too remorseful air upon her face,
As of angel fallen from grace?"

The poem from which this quotation is taken, "The Lacking Sense," seems to voice the eerie atmosphere of the valley when alone with the east wind and nature's inclemencies—to picture the sad phase of it when the green robes of mead and upland have been seared, and the skeleton of its trees revealed to a neutral sky.

But the whole neighbourhood has poetic suggestiveness. Upwey's historic spring wells forth in pellucid exaltation in the vicinity, and its song of liquid ecstasy is the dominant note in the life of those who live by the well-head. Then, in the heart of Waddon Vale, beneath the frown of Blagdon Hill, lies Po'sham (Portisham), now here and there blushing into red-bricked modernity. A monument to Hardy, the naval hero, is reared on the lonely hill summit above his native village, and, fortunately, the house in which Bob Loveday visited him is still standing within its high-reared garden wall. When Abbotsbury is reached, the traveller is ushered into the presence of a monastic dream, a tropical garden, and a swannery. In and out of an umbrageous valley glides a slow stream, whitely smiling at the pilgrim of to-day, who would mount the hill, crested by the dismantled chapel of St. Catherine, which, for five hundred years, has fronted the blue tranquillity of the English Channel. Henry VIII.

suppressed the monks and left the monastery, with its enormous tithe barn, to the ruination of time, and the doom of the superseded. Altogether, Waddon Vale has many charms to recommend it to those who prefer byways to beaten paths.

That strongly conceived sardonic poem, "The Dame of Athelhall," has an underside of historic glamour, for the title is an abbreviated rendering of "Athelhampton Hall," a fine block of mutilated mediævalism about five miles from Wool (Wellbridge). Its present occupant, Mr. A. de Lafontaine, has exercised a cultured judgment in restoration somewhat rare when it is remembered that archæological value often means domestic inconvenience. By long contact with humanity, this fifteenth century mansion has won its way out of the zone of material fact and utility, and asserted itself as a sentient presence in the realm of romance, thus enabling Mr. Hardy to fitly incorporate it in a poetic medium. To the archæologist, pure and simple, Athelhampton Hall is a treasure house, while to the mind not deadened by academic traditions, it wears a tranquil air of remoteness and hints at something almost human, and deeply wistful, lingering for ever behind the stained glass of memory.

Contemporary, and especially local events, have not often provoked Mr. Hardy's poetic impulse,

but "The Going of the Battery" is an example of a Dorchester incident which inspired him to write one of the most notable poems relative to the South African War, for in it national and civic emotion is fused at white heat. On November 2, 1899, the 73rd Battery R.F.A. departed from the Dorchester depôt for the front, the night being dark and rainy, the hour late, and on November 2, 1899, the poem appears to have been written, judging from the date in the collected edition. The event stirred every heart, and sent the whole population into the street to witness the passing of the Battery. Cries, sobs and cheers followed the soldiers' progress through the surging press of people, and those ineffectual tones are the voices that have been sublimated into large and full expression by the Wessex novelist. Two verses appear to have been added since its first appearance in the *Graphic*, the first and fifth, which accentuate the power of the poem.

That other fine war poem, "The Souls of the Slain," is a weird vision which came to the writer at the Bill of Portland—

> "the Isle by the Race,
> Many-caverned, bald, wrinkled of face."[12]

Here, again, the mood of the landscape has given the key to the poet's musing. Not even the keenly

buoyant could maintain their animation unimpaired amid the spectacle of ruined nature at the Bill of Portland on a December day, for the spot is then burdened with a sense of deprivation, and forms a sympathetic setting for such a poem as "The Souls of the Slain," who are finally lost in the currents of the Race—

> "that engulphing, ghast, sinister place."

Incidental proof of the manner in which Wessex has been enwoven into the warp and woof of Mr. Hardy's nature, is contained more especially in the poem entitled "In the Old Theatre, Fiesole." Dreams of classicism amid the Circus are disturbed by a child

> "... who showed an ancient coin
> That bore the image of a Constantine."

Immediately the Roman world amid the streets of Casterbridge is recalled, for—

> "... her act flashed home—
> In that mute moment to my opened mind
> The power, the pride, the reach of perished Rome."

Notwithstanding the strong bias to metaphysical speculation, which seems to have become more accentuated in *Poems of the Past and the Present*, the delightful place-names of Wessex frequently occur—"Yell'-ham," "Blackmoor Vale," "Mellstock," "High Stoy,"

"Bubb Down," "Casterbridge," and "Durnover Field." These instances of racial flavour are too rare, and though the hint of it in the use of the word "bide" in the last verse of that poignant apostrophe, "To an Unborn Pauper Child," is daring, it is nevertheless justified, because it is a part of the living speech of the people. With such a mastery of the dialect, it is to be regretted that Mr. Hardy has only published one poem in the vernacular, "The Fire at Tranter Sweatley's," which is a rustic comedy inimitably told, and seasoned with a pawky humour that gives zest to the tale. And I hope, one day, Mr. Hardy will add to the number of peculiarly individual illustrations that have already appeared, because of their richness in the subtle quality of atmosphere. The rural pieces are few in number, and most of them are found in *Wessex Poems*: "The Alarm," with its quaint and valiant reminiscences of "Boney," "The Dance at the Phœnix," grimly humorous, "Friends Beyond," "The Slow Nature," and "In a Eweleaze near Weatherbury." Linked to these are the rustic narrative poems, "The Sergeant's Song," "Valenciennes," "San Sebastian" and "The Stranger's Song." Their great simplicity of homely speech introduces the reader into the fascinating region of the Wessex which Mr. Hardy has endeared to the literary world. Though his abstract specula-

tions are thought-arresting, and sufficient to deserve a reputation if signed by an unknown author, his genius finds its truest expression, and meets a far more widespread appreciation, when employed in the *venue* wherein such well-merited laurels have been won. But though the majority of Mr. Hardy's constituency acknowledge their preferences, many of them must admit the following poems, outside the rustic group, into their private anthologies—"The Impercipient," "The Going of the Battery," "To an Unborn Pauper Child," and "The Bedridden Peasant to an Unknowing God."

Those in search of the basic qualities of Mr. Hardy's mind will find them in the *Poems of the Past and the Present*. Criticism of technique, and larger questions of the functions of poetry, may well be left to the poetic vivisectionists, while the ordinary reader of culture can choose the better part of appreciation. For those who would keep in touch with the trend of modern thought cannot afford to neglect the last published conclusions of one of England's foremost writers.

ILLUMINATIVE SURNAMES

FEW novelists equal Mr. Hardy in the choice of fit names for imaginary characters. There is a subtle correspondence between the men and women portrayed and the cognomens they bear. Often the names themselves are sound pictures of disposition, as in the case of Michael Henchard, in the very pronunciation of which there is a touch of masterful harshness. To one who is familiar with Wessex patronymics, the derivation of this name from Trenchard, an old Dorset family, seems very likely, another characteristic surname being Fitzpiers, though the archaic spelling gives "Fitz Piers." All the names are redolent of the soil, and carry with them pastoral suggestiveness—Chickerel, Winterborne, Gillingham, Hinton, and Melbury are place names, while Bencomb is only a slight variation of Bincombe. Other representative surnames are Whittle, Clare, Priddle, Dare, Dowden, and Garland. The rustics' *penchant* for Biblical names is illustrated frequently in the choice of such names as Solomon, Christian,

Michael, Jude, Matthew, Mark, Angel. A symbolic intention can be divined in them all, and indicate another instance of the writer's unerring artistic instincts, and prove the potency of rightly chosen names in works of fiction.

SOME WESSEX TOWNS AND PLACES

The Gibraltar of Wessex

THE strange peninsula of Portland, the scene of *The Well-Beloved*, also cast its spell over Victor Hugo, who touched upon it in *L'Homme qui Rit*. Nor is this fascination a cause of wonder when the fashion of the place is rightly understood. The Isle of Portland, as it is termed in official documents, rises from the western sea like a jagged browed Sphinx, encompassed to the margin of the drifting tides by rocky fragments of its dissolution. In semblance it is akin to the antediluvian, suggestive of untutored energies and the welter of chaos, and eloquent of processes arrested ere their final development. At some remote period the island burst from the molten heart of Nature, its fissures and twisted strata still denoting the terrific force of the ancient eruption. This Sphinx of the west, rugged and majestic, towers out of the sea like an embodiment of death;

its heart holds in a frigid grip the materials of a remote age in the form of its famous stone, wherein death is petrified and rendered visible in trees that bathed in pre-historic sunlight and huge shells laved by the waters of a primaeval ocean. But even though it hides death in an adamantine coffin, the island itself has been engaged in unremitting conflict with the sea that drapes it in a blue garment. Its coasts have been honeycombed by the tempest-flung waves, that slide resoundingly into the caverns they have dug out for themselves. Nevertheless, the island rears itself above the might of the sea and its own decay in implacable majesty.

The history of Portland has no great theatrical incident to make its past a brilliant pageant. It is said to be the ancient Vindilia Isle, and tradition asserts that the Phœnicians knew the value of its stone, though the Danes must have viewed this natural product in an equivocable light, for when they invaded the island the natives made such a terrible retort with their slings that the enemy were repeatedly discomfited. Slings were at one time deadly weapons in the hands of Portlanders, who hurled their stones with the precision of modern marksmen, and this dexterity was taught in truly Spartan fashion. Every morning the lads were sent forth by their sires with rude slings to hunt their breakfast, or remain food-

less till success crowned their efforts. Kill first and eat afterwards would have formed an appropriate motto to inscribe on their portals, and undoubtedly this training made the young barbarians hardy and their hands cunning. Through the next few hundred years little of public interest is recorded of the island. King Henry VIII. embattled the shore opposite the roadstead, the castle being in shape like a Brobdingnagian pudding, and is still inhabited. After the Civil Wars, in which the natives were embroiled on the Royalist side, Portland disappears from history, and the veil is not lifted till the erection of a breakwater by the Government in the year 1849.

The building of the breakwater, together with the establishment of a penal settlement, was viewed by the islanders with suspicion, not unmixed with animosity, and the first party of navvies imported for these works was received not only with sullenness, but with signs of overt hostility in some cases. When the labourers marched through the straggling villages the women came to their doors agape, saying one to the other: "Lawk! why they be men just to same as our'n," a discovery rife with wonder, which supplied material for much gossip in many a stone-flagged kitchen. On hearing of the intentions of the Government for the first time, an old fisherman was heard to say with some heat: "Guv'ment? Guv'-

ment? Who be maister Guv'ment, a should like to know? What do'ee want?" Thus the Portlanders were first inoculated with a spirit other than their own, and the wall of jealous exclusiveness breached, though the presence of the "kimberlins," as strangers were termed, was bitterly resented, an attitude not unknown in the present day, when a railway girdles the Rock, and London is no longer a mystical dream.

The natives themselves are as individual as their island. Imagination and personality have been fed and nurtured by the scattered desolation of rocks, day-long communion with the unyielding stone, isolation, the hurtle of tempests, and the mysterious malignity of the sea. These have been the formative influences of the race, and so it comes about that the natural features of Portland have re-acted upon the inhabitants. The kinship between the island and its children is almost weird; they both seem to have been moulded out of the same elements. Grey is the uniform colour; grey also are the hearts of the people, unlaughing their visage, and unready their speech. The inexorable theology of Wesley appealed to them mightily—the sternness and grandeur of it were seized upon by these hardy folk, as something akin to things with which they had been familiar from childhood. Charles Wesley preached in Portland with wonderful effect, and writing in reference to an even-

ing service held at his lodgings there he said: "The power and blessing came. My mouth and their hearts were opened. The rocks were broken in pieces and melted into tears on every side. I continued to exhort them from seven to ten to save themselves from this untoward generation. We could not part. I left the little society of twenty members confirmed and comforted." During this visit Charles Wesley wrote the hymn beginning—"Come, thou all-victorious Lord" (No. 84, Wesley's Hymns), the reference to the "hearts of stone" being smitten by the "hammer of the Word" in the first verse being an evidence of the suggestiveness of the environment in which the author found himself.

Nature had tuned life into accord with it, and these quarriers and fishers felt themselves to be neither interlopers nor strangers; they were necessary to the earth, and by their contact and communion with it they had almost put a human heart into the stone. No way of eluding the mysteries and verities of life existed; there were no distractions and frivolities to obscure the visage of reality and give it light and debonnaire semblances. Methodism throve in the island, though it did not displace the old beliefs in witchcraft and magic, relative to which an anecdote is told about a certain local preacher. Once, while on his "round," he stayed at the cottage of an old

woman who seemed in great trouble. Winning her confidence, she told him "her cow wer that bad, she didden know what wer the matter wi 'en. She'd gied it a-plenty o' victuals, but er did sicken so terrible much, that er must be bewitched." The local preacher's sympathies were aroused, and he went immediately to the shed to examine the stricken animal. Placing his hands upon its quarters, he said solemnly: "If it lives, it lives; if it dies, it dies." Much to his surprise the animal regained its normal health, but some time after this miracle had been worked he himself fell ill. One day the old woman presented herself at his door and demanded admission, but was refused in accordance with the doctor's order. Nevertheless, she clamoured so loudly that at last her name was mentioned to the apparently dying man, who requested that his old friend should be allowed to see him. Entering softly, as one well versed in the exorcist's spell, and confident of its potency, the old woman stepped to the bedside, and laying her hand on the suffering patient, pronounced the magical words: "Pore feller! if he lives, he lives; if he dies, he dies." But strange to say he recovered.

The usual aspect of Portland is a greyness of rock zoned by an emerald sea; often there is an outer ring of light when the horizon is fired by the sun, and not seldom does the mist shroud the summit,

and when so hooded the natives say, "She's got her night-cap on again." All the elements necessary to the nurture of heroes here exist, side by side with the raw material for another Iliad. Despite the unenviable notoriety once gained by Portlanders as wreckers, their deeds of bravery in face of shipwreck on the Chesil Beach have wiped out the reproach contained in the old couplet, said to have been the usual prayer of the natives during the winter: "Blow wind, rise sea, ship 'shore 'fore day." There are now only a few of the true old natives left, and these can sometimes be observed on the sunny bench outside the quaint tavern on Winter Rudge, at Chesil, the hamlet cowering under the lea of the beach at its junction with the isle. They are pathetic figures, who work strenuously with their eyes, the sole remaining point of vitality in their derelict bodies. Forgotten are the changes of time as they take a fatherly interest in the young fishers employed, perhaps on their nets or lerrets, and while the old men watch and criticise, their work-marred hands move in mechanical sympathy. These are the representatives of the old island order, who resent the new spirit animating their sons, and feel a growing strangeness amid the scenes of their youth. Somewhat of the mystery and terror of the sea lingers round their bent forms, as with fixed wistfulness of

expression they gaze at the waters of the West Bay, and even on the fairest day it can be seen that their reflections are sombrely tinged by their tragic environment. These are the harvestmen of the sea, the vikings of the tempest battle, the champions who have fought in single-handed combat with the springing billows. Perhaps their odd time has been filled up with quarry work, but they were born within sound of the surge in the quaint stone cottages behind the beach, cottages which are trenched, in order to give the storm-driven water free play, when front and back door are lashed open, and the waters pour through the basement. Their playground was the beach and the "popples" their toys; here they helped their mothers spread the damp linen, and tasted the first delights of responsibility in weighting the garments with stones, for the sea is the alpha and omega of their existence. The scent and taste of the brine was imbibed with their mother's milk, and in old age their grandchildren lead them to the beach, to the inexplicable comfort of the old sea.

Rarely do these ancient fishers dissipate thought in speech, information being as hard to extract as fossils from the rock, and when they do send their minds questing into the past, it is difficult for them to chip artistically complete fragments from the quarry of recollection. The minds of these natives clamber

back into childhood over a series of disasters, marriages and deaths being remembered and dated by the shipwrecks on that terrible shore. They have grown old in the yearly contemplation of tragedy, as scarcely a winter within their memory has ever passed without its fatalities, and what they once witnessed they see again in summer, when the waves crawl over the beach. Strange legends of the sea linger hereabouts, tinctured and distorted, perhaps, by defective telling, but still thought-arresting. Once on Top o' Hill there lived a strange individual in the hamlet of Wakeham, who kept the *Mermaid Tavern*, and was consequently known as "Wold Maremaid," a reputed "wise man." Amid his familiars he was feared more than welcomed, while his advent under the hill was generally believed to herald catastrophe. Especially was this the case in the "mack'el" season, when the fishers vowed luck forsook them when he appeared on the beach in the morning. Even at the period of writing the presence of women during fishing operations is resented, under the impression that, in some inscrutable way they disastrously affect the haul. The prescription for a conger bite is the flesh of the fish applied to the wound, and the fishers believe the turning of the tide tends either to accelerate the death or recovery of the sick.

In the days remembered by these aged natives, the

three-mile-distant town of Weymouth was considered to be quite a foreign land, and visitors who chanced to die on the island were sometimes buried apart from the ancestral dust in the Strangers' Burial Ground. When an island lad determined to marry his lass, he built a cottage on a piece of appropriate land, with the help of the neighbours, the materials being ready to his hand, and it henceforth remained the freehold right of his descendants.

The nuptials of a quarrier used to be an affair of some pomp and circumstance, peculiarized by now obsolete customs. An anvil from the nearest blacksmith's shop was placed on the line of route, and the hollow of it charged with gunpowder, and fired as the bridal party went by. The rear of the procession was brought up by several quarriers carrying guns, which were discharged at intervals as a *feu de joie*. On his reappearance in the quarry the bridegroom was subjected to a curious method of extortion; the handles of a tool similar to a large pair of shears were squeezed round his neck till he cried "Beer," and then all the gang retired to the nearest tavern, to drink a "randy quart" at the young husband's expense.

In the nomenclature of Portland the word field is unknown, the portion of land signified by that term being called a lawn. Lawyers are rarely em-

ployed in conveyancing, because land is still conveyed by the island custom known as Church Gift. The deed is drawn up by the vendor on an ordinary sheet of paper, and he merely hands it to the purchaser before a clergyman and other witnesses in the parish church, and with the payment of the money the transaction is legalized.

The existence of the Convict Establishment has been responsible for many an incident, tragic in itself, but charged with keener poignancy because of the bleak unfriendliness of the surroundings. Such an incident was the suicide and funeral of a prisoner, which occurred a few years ago.

His hand had been against every man, and at last it turned against himself. The convict was then an old man, whose hair had turned from brown to grey, from grey to white during his imprisonment: part of the term having been spent in solitary confinement, owing to his violence. Not many days before the expiration of his sentence he had been punished for a slight offence with a rigour which some thought exceeded the nature of his misdemeanour. Amid the darkness of the cell he waited till the feet of the warder echoed along the further end of the corridor, and then, hastily tearing his sheet and twisting the shreds into a rope, he savagely dragged the life from his body. The next time the prison officer looked through

the apertured door he saw the blackened face of the prostrate prisoner. His death was duly reported to the Governor, word was sent to the coroner, and the jury returned a charitable verdict, otherwise the corpse would have been laid to rest without Christian obsequies.

Clouds like a funeral pall hung over the bleak churchyard where the convict was to be interred. Furrowed with quarries, the rough fields sloped to an angry sea veiled in mist, from whence the wind leapt with stinging suggestions of brine. Down streamed the rain, and throwing a sack over his shoulders, an old gravedigger kicked the mud from his boots, and swung forward to the lea of the church. With a glance seaward he spoke of the weather, hitched up his belt, and pointing to a plot of ground, sighed: "Pore dear hearts." The ground was examined, and jerking a mud-stained thumb at the mould, he continued: "They do make as good vlowers as ar'n o' we," further explaining himself by remarking that the soil under inspection was the last resting-place of many convicts. The absence of memorial tablets was noticed, though the old man wagged his head impatiently, and said: "It bain't allowed. Cover 'em up, an' hidey 'em, pore sonnies." This he repeated several times, evidently much struck by the merciful necessity of oblivion.

Presently a single bell clanged, recalling pictures of children thronging to school; at the gate was a crowd of villagers, and moving into their midst came a combination hearse and wagon. The empty church smelt of seaweed, and when the clergyman hurried into the vestry, a heavy box grated on the tiled pavement. The air of the sacred building touched the face like a clammy hand, and when the rain sounded on the roof, like the distant beat of mourning drums, the glimmer of white vestments shone in the pulpit. The service proceeded, the responses being made by a verger in a nautical tone of voice, while the impatient undertaker and the three restless assistants scraped their feet with the tedium of it all, and looked sympathetically at the emotionless figure of the warder on duty. When the service came to an end the bearers shouldered their burden with alacrity, and as the tiny procession went forth into the rain, the unsorrowful wind whipped the pall from the coffin, and a youth dropped behind and scrambled the cloth into his arms. The passing bell clanged from the tower, and the small party hovered over a heap of moist clay; all but the officiating minister wore their hats, because of the rain that hung over the land like tightly drawn wires. Soon the burly verger picked up a handful of earth, and the clergyman stretched forth his arm,

leaving the gravedigger to bend over his spade, and the warder to fill a preparatory pipe and complain of the hardships of a prison officer's lot.

The gravity of Portlanders finds a yearly relaxation in their Martinmas fair, to which a passing reference is made in *The Well-Beloved*. The dearth of public amusements accounts for the abandon generally characterizing a festival to which young and old have eagerly flocked for generations, and the following description is an attempt to paint the annual occasion when Portlanders play.

November rain had fallen all day, and at night the muddy ground was smeared with the reflection of the whirling lights of the fair, jammed into small compass by parallel rows of houses, and flanked by the Chesil Beach. Above towered the rocky height with flickering household lights; in the utmost height flamed the stars, in the depth below palpitated the unquiet sea. A child shrieked by, scattering mud in his haste to spend the pennies that burnt his hand. Here and there naphtha lamps flared, shedding thin streams of burning oil; lamps burnt modestly among trays of winkles, where youths congregated in gastronomic rivalry. Electric lights gleamed on wooden horses, ridden by men and women of all ages, swept around a sphere of glinting glass and gaudy woodwork to the strains of an organ emitting volcanoes

of sound. Only by standing on one side could the fair be seen to advantage. Up and down through the mud between the booths moved a throng, motley with blue jerseys, red coats, surprising shawls, and brilliant feathers. To and fro the people seethed, giving the impression that the whole scene was boiling with excitement and bubbling with mirth. Men, usually staid, shouted and rushed forward amid streams of water from the "teasers"; girls, generally timid, laughed immoderately at the same gentle attentions. Mothers eagerly plodded through the crowd, and still pressed forward, reminiscent joy smoothing the wrinkles from their features, and, elevated above all, a tiny lad shrieked his delight, and could hardly keep his place on father's shoulder.

The sounds were as various as the people. —cries, drums, organs, bells, and hideous horns made a tangle of noises awful to hear. On a stage in front of a booth, panelled with crudely brutal pictures, danced a woman in tawdry finery; dancing has been supposed to symbolize joy, but no beautiful gleam lightened her stodgy visage, nor touched the features of the girl jogging by her side with heavy steps. In order to further induce the people to "walk up," a man at the corner of a stage brought forth noises from an organette like the intensified bleating of sheep, and varied it by the clashing of



AT THE GATE OF "SYLVANIA CASTLE," PORTLAND (THE GIBRALTAR OF WESSEX)

Photo by Mace, Weymouth

cymbals. The women who presided at the shooting galleries had many things in common—urgent manners, silver rings, and cataracts of fringe. Everywhere the air resounded with cries of "The Jolly Fun of the Fair." In explanation of this iterated cry a stick tasselled with a feathery bunch of variegated paper or a leaden tube of water was thrust forward by a woman who was trying to wrap herself in an elusive shawl. Young women and old, men and piping boys, sold these fun-provoking toys, their special virtues, however, not being imparted to the sorry vendors of them.

One old man who sat on the edge of a box was less persistent in his appeals; from his gaunt visage dirty grey whiskers hung like threads of fine wire, while an ample coat bagged round his wizened body. His eyes seemed fixed, not on things, but thoughts, his whole demeanour and appearance suggesting a derelict field labourer who lived in the past. Perhaps the old man fancied he saw the poppies flaunting their imprisoned flames amid the ripened corn, and above the tumult heard water tinkling in green and unseen places. Again and again his mind would return and jolt against the present, and then would be heard the cry of "All the Jolly Fun of the Fair." Presently a girl decorated with spurious jewellery crossed to him from a shooting gallery, bring-

ing a sack for the old man's feet, and not waiting for thanks she returned to her duties, and used language to an insolent customer revealing the range of her objurgatory vocabulary.

Drawing-room people adopt a form of wooing either unknown or despised by those who stand at the doorways of the world. Two engaging methods found favour with the hardier sex; either they tickled the admired one with feathery bunches of paper, or greeted the damsel with squirting jets of water. Strange to say these tokens of approval were taken in good part by the girls, who screamed and rushed forward among the excited revellers. Here, at a shooting gallery, a young sportsman was aiming at coloured balls, bobbing at the top of water jets, which were pumped into position by an aged child, whose hands were of the fashion of a man's. Opposite this drudge a tipsy sailor stood on a staging, smiting a drum and lifting his feet, like one seeking to persuade himself and others that he could still walk. Near by stood a deep shallow booth, lined with rows of little boxes at the further end, into which the spectator was invited to throw a ball, in exchange for a small payment. If successful the lucky man received a ghastly oleograph, and if unsuccessful, he was requested to try again: "You never knows yer luck, sir; it mebbe

the turnen o' the tide." In addition to the pastimes enumerated, for one penny the reveller could throw balls at cocoa nuts or at rows of figures, fluffy as birds, that dropped when smitten. Unfortunately less desirable attractions were not wanting, and one need be no prophet to say that before the lapse of many years the fair will be suspended.

The Island Haunts of the "Well-Beloved" as seen by Jocelyn Pierston

Jocelyn Pierston, the central figure of *The Well-Beloved*, spoke of himself as belonging to "a strange visionary race of the west," a description both significant and true when viewed in the light of his ancestry. In the first place, he was a native of natives, a fact denoted by his name, which is a combination of the two oldest patronymics of the island, Pearce and Stone. The lineage of the islanders is composite—the blood of the Dane and the Celt mingles in their veins, and imparts to them a peculiar individuality. Although no people are less appreciative of inspired verse, the unvoiced poetry of sea, sky, and unloosed winds touch their thoughts, and impregnate them with wistful visionary tendencies. It may be thought that Jocelyn Pierston is merely the exaggerated

presentation of a highly artistic temperament, but such personalities exist to the writer's knowledge, men and women moulded by similar influences, and questing after the same fleeting light.

Nicknames are a local necessity, illustrated here in the instance of the "roan mare Caros," who were so called to distinguish them from others of the same name. This practice originates, not from a motive of concealment, but from the paucity of patronymics. Without previous knowledge of an individual's local appellation, it would be difficult to find him among the quarries and fisheries. An example of this occurred on one occasion when a gentleman, who had made repeated inquiries for James Miller, searched in vain for one of that name, because he did not possess the secret of his cognomen. By chance he discovered Miller sailed under the nickname of Wapsey, and accidentally meeting a near relative of this man's, asked him where this person lived, signifying him by the name of James Miller. "I doan't know," was the reply; "there bain't no such man as he hereabouts, sir." "He is commonly called Wapsey," added the gentleman, with well-assumed innocence. "Why, Wapsey, sir, Wapsey," ejaculated the astonished islander, "Wapsey's my feyther, sir, Wapsey's my feyther."

The *Well-Beloved* treats of a period when Portland

well-nigh eluded the touch of time, and after three years' absence from his native rock, Pierston was astonished at its unchanging peculiarities. All the lanes and streets tumble down from Top o' Hill in cataracts, the houses on the slopes being disarranged seemingly by their headlong flight, and are scattered about like a Chinese puzzle, chimneys and doorsteps being in a line with one another. Arriving where the railway station now stands, Pierston would cross in front of the Chesil Beach—that lofty ridge of pebbles extending westward for ten miles. Its average height is fifty feet, and its breadth varies from quarter to half a mile. The pebbles in general consist of white calcareous spar, mingled with quartz, jasper and chert. Where the stones meet the shore at the fishing hamlet of Chesil, they are the largest in size and the least rounded in form; but as the drift of the currents and the pressure of the ocean continually drive them westward, they become smaller and smoother with the constant attrition, until in the course of years they are diminished from masses of ten and twelve pounds to little pebbles of an ounce and less in weight. It is said that the diminution in the size is so gradual that an experienced pilot cast on the beach in the darkest night could tell his relative distance from either extremity by the size of the pebbles alone. From the earliest periods the beach has been

subject to the encroachments of the sea, and during the prevalence of heavy sou'westerly gales, the pebbles on the lower half of the beach are partially removed, and the underlying bed of clay exposed. When this occurs Spanish doubloons and bars of solid silver, locally known as "ducky stones," are sometimes found. Washing this wonderful beach is "that sinister bay to the west," whose weird influences were felt by Pierston. "It was a presence—an imaginary shape or essence from the human multitude lying below; those who had gone down in vessels of war, East Indiamen, barges, brigs, and ships of the Armada. . . . There could almost be felt the brush of their huge composite ghost, as it ran a shapeless figure over the isle, shrieking for some good god who would disunite it again."

The aged men who haunt the beach on the seaward side of Chesil's quaint tavern know of the times when some of those wraiths first haunted this eerie shore, a knowledge which would be shared by Pierston, who probably glanced at the treacherous bay ere turning homewards. The most vivid recollections spring from the winter of '72, when in the November of that year the West Bay became the arena of some memorable catastrophes. On the thirtieth of the month a terrific gale raged from the sou' west—the waves formed themselves a mile out to

sea, rearing their phantom crests and leaping to the shore, where they crashed like a cataract of rock, the upward driven spray waving in the air like gossamer curtains. Full well reading the portents of the storm the fishers donned their oilskins and thronged the beach. Coastguardsmen were also on the look-out, and presently descried the *Jane Catherine* with disabled canvas, and topsail and mainsail clewed. Soon her bow pointed to the beach, on which she was violently driven, only a few yards from the crowd. Those who viewed the disaster speak of the crew crouching in the rigging like frightened birds on a branch, but the wind was too high for the life-saving apparatus to be used, and the watchers on the beach could do nothing. One seaman, who clung to a rope from the ship's side, lost his hold and fell on the pebbles in the back wash of a wave. For a minute he sprawled there like a crab, and then a billow fell on him, stripped off his clothing and waved his naked body aloft on its crest. All hands were lost, and the vessel broken and scattered in fragments up and down the shore.

This tragedy was only the forerunner of a greater calamity on the following Monday, when an Australian emigrant ship, *The Royal Adelaide*, became a total wreck. The gale had not spent itself, and seaward there was a dense fog. Somewhere about two o'clock

in the afternoon a full-rigged ship was observed by a coastguard within a thousand yards of the beach, but the fog lifting, the captain saw his danger, managed to wear ship, and tried to run down Channel. The coastguards and fishermen who were assembled on the beach considered the position of the vessel so critical that they prepared the rocket apparatus for any emergency, being of the opinion that she would not be able to get out of the bay. The battle against the furious seas proved unavailing, and soon rockets and signals of distress went up in panic-stricken haste from the doomed merchantman. Night was drawing in with a shrieking wind, which cut off the plumes of the billows, and dashed them into the faces of the anxious crowd, who burnt lights in Chesil cove in order to warn the vessel of the point where beaching could be effected with the least amount of risk. But *The Royal Adelaide* could not make this cove, and drove shoreward two miles higher, where the waves swept her broadside on, almost to the feet of the people who had gathered to render assistance. The poop was crowded with passengers, who were again and again hidden from view by clouds of surf. Notwithstanding the volleying thuds of the breakers, the Portland fishermen attached themselves to life lines, and repeatedly rushed towards the wreck in their attempts to throw a rope on board,

an effort which, in one instance, was crowned with success. Brilliant blue lights cast a garish reflection on the seaman who clutched the merciful rope, and other sailors could be seen crawling along the tilted decks with lamps in their hands; the moon glinted through ragged clouds, and showed like the face of a phantom behind the tremulous veils of spray. By the time two men had been washed from the ship and drowned, the life-saving apparatus was erected, the cradle drawn on board, and the first passenger landed on the beach. Those on *The Royal Adelaide* seemed cowed by the clanging seas; their faces were half revealed in the glimmering lights as they clung to the bulwark nearest the shore, watching the tardy and dangerous work of rescue, which entailed great risk, both to the men engaged, and to the occupant of the cradle, who was constantly engulphed by the sea.

When it became known that women and children were on board, the huge crowd were beside themselves with anxiety, because it was rightly conjectured many of them would be lost in trying to come on shore, or would fear to trust themselves in the cradle. The first lady who made the attempt lost her life, and the tiny ark of deliverance returned empty, the awful significance of it being enough to intimidate the bravest. The last to leave were two men and a child,

who got into the cradle together, but it was caught by an immense wave, the rope snapped like cotton, and the occupants were drowned. Cut off from all hope of escape, one passenger remained on board, an old lady, who waved her arms and opened and shut her mouth convulsively. But the masts had gone by the board, the vessel was breaking up, and the poor woman had to be left to her fate, making a total of seven drowned and sixty saved. Within an hour from the breaking of the ship's back, the beach was strewn with the cargo. Large quantities of proof spirit were washed on shore, and a drunken orgie ensued among the roughs who had assembled in search of treasure trove, three men dying of intoxication and exposure. For miles the coast was strewn with wreckage, mingled with articles of clothing, cases of matches, and provisions. An old fisher who was present still treasures some linen saved from the wreck; it is partly pulverized by its contact with the pebbles, while the silver spoons he cautiously exhibits are battered and dented, and bear vivid testimony to the power of the mad waves.

Leaving the Chesil Beach, Pierston climbed the main road, termed by Mr. Hardy "The Street of the Wells," which leads through the townlet of Fortune's Well. The street is irregular and steep, and is intersected on the right hand by lanes opening to the lower

slopes. Probably he would have met a team of quarry horses, dragging stone on a heavy wagon with broad solid wheels, a method of conveyance now superseded by traction engines. All the associations of the locality would be known to him. The *Royal Hotel* would remind one versed in island usages of the Court Leet held there once a year. The mode of keeping the manorial accounts is by means of a reeve staff, said to be of Danish origin, and by it the reeve, or bailiff, collects the manor dues, as on the staff is described every acre or lawn of land in Portland.

Toiling up the abrupt acclivity, Pierston would pass his future residence, a plain and sombre house of stone, near the road leading to the Verne fortress. Turning to the right, he climbed the steep path running sheer up to the summit, or Top o' Hill, commanding the sweep of the Chesil Beach, curved like a brown snake around the limits of the West Bay. Arriving on the plateau, he saw the broad white road, thick with pools of powdered stone. Nature here shows herself dishevelled, tumbled and torn—a confusion of scattered stone and deep gullies, where the quarry cranes sprawl like huge spiders; above, the tremor of heat; beyond, the distant haze of blue. Onward, the road branches into the hamlet of Easton, a compromise between the primitive and the modern. Brick houses blush by the side of antique stone.

cottages; these have porches like diminutive anterooms, with settles inside, and windows in the wall to provide the ruminative inhabitant with a dreary outlook. As Pierston pushed on his homeward way, adjusting his sophisticated mind to quaintly simple conditions, he left behind him the unassuming dwelling of Grammer Sue, now deceased.

On sunny afternoons and bleak winter days she used to sit in the porch, leaning on a crooked stick, which she often shook at the boys who teased her from "overright the road." Life brimmed from her large brown eyes, shrouded by a simple sun-bonnet, which threw into relief the time-tinged hue of her thin visage. The lantern window in her porch commanded the lonely road dipping over the hill. Down that abrupt descent she had not been for thirty years before her death, nor had she ever seen a train, nor mastered the arts of reading or writing. But Grammer Sue was learned in island lore, and knew the way to brew thyme tea, salt mackerel, and make arrowroot better than any one else, not to speak of a sagacious knowledge of the human heart, and a fervent belief in the occult powers she was reputed to possess.

Day by day she saw the quarriers tramp by to work, blue jerseyed, and laden with the tools of their craft carried shoulder-wise. They greeted Grammer in the morning and at dusk, knowing she would still

be keeping her vigil. Sometimes a boy in passing would taunt her semi-widowhood by shouting "London," and rush away, leaving the lonely figure convulsed.

When the face of Grammer Sue was rosily dimpled, the man whose name she then bore sailed to the metropolis in one of the local stone vessels, and as he departed she watched the dust spurt from his heels through the window in the porch. His arms waved farewell on the brow of the hill, and Black Coomben, as he was called, went on his way never to return.

On the night he should have arrived, the evening star hung over the West Bay, and Sue watched it westering as the day approached without him. Then the eyes peering through the lantern window were bright as the star; many times had Venus dipped and glowed in the west, and the eyes were still at the window, though they looked forth through the film of age.

People who were known to be on the eve of visiting London always came to Grammer Sue, and called on their return, sighing as they departed for one who could not be comforted. It is said that two knives and forks were always set for each meal, and that a pair of sheets was kept perpetually aired. She never spoke of grief or despair, but allowed the personal point of view to be merged in the story of other folks' sorrows.

Maids in love came to her for counsel, fishers unfortunate in their enterprises sought her advice, the friends of the halt and sick came to her cottage for healing herbs, and sometimes others called for antidotes against the evil eye. Much marketing was done under the hill, and the women speeding thither always stopped and gossiped with the old dame, who deigned to receive offerings from the baskets when they returned well laden.

One day Grammer Sue took her usual place in the porch, and received the morning greetings of the straggling wayfarers; farewells were shouted across the road at night by the homeward wending quarriers, but under the open rafters of a tiny bedroom lay a stiffening corpse, and Grammer Sue took her accustomed seat no more.

When Pierston arrived home, his father was not there to greet him, and he glanced across the common to the yards where the saws were grating against the blocks of stone, the rough material of his own profession. This stone was first brought into note in the reign of James I, when the banqueting chamber at Whitehall was hewn piecemeal out of the quarries. It was found superior to other stones in the freedom with which it could be cut, and hence its name, freestone. Sir Christopher Wren used it largely, not only for St. Paul's Cathedral, but for the reconstruction of

the public edifices destroyed by the fire of London. The stratification of the quarries is exemplified in Blacknore Cliff, which rises three hundred feet above the sea level. The lowest bed is composed of sandstone concretions imbedded in a dark marl; above this are layers of grey and brown sandy marl and sandstone. In succession, the following series of strata rise: (1) Shelly grey limestone, (2) sandy limestone with chert, (3) bubbly beds with chert, (4) compact and chalky limestone with chert, (5) good stone, (6) roach, (7) topmost cap. Over this mass is the Dirt Bed, mixed with the exuviae of tropical plants and fossilized trees. Flitting about the quarries hover the tiny birds known as wheatears, which are indigenous to the island. As a native and sculptor, all these facts would be known to Pierston.

Passing through the basement of his father's house, he entered the garden, surrounded, like all the other gardens, by a wall of dry jointed spawls. It adjoined the garden of the Caros, where, on this occasion, he heard Avice the First upbraiding herself for kissing him with the boldness of former days. Wishing to soothe Avice after unintentionally slighting her, it is said he followed the girl into her home to the foot of the stairs, and this seemingly unceremonious conduct is thus explained by the author: "The manners of the isle were primitive and

straightforward, even among the well-to-do." To a certain extent, these qualities characterize the natives of to-day. Men who have made fortunes out of the stone industry still reside in plain cottages, dress in homely guise, scout fashion and the pomp of spacious houses, "wrastle" with the Lord in the chapels, and delight in giving one another the island greeting of "How be, my son, how be?"

Having soothed Avice, Pierston took her a notable walk. Leaving the village of Wakeham dozing amid stone dust and sunlight, they proceeded along the southern cliff edge, till they came to Cave's Hole, an aperture in the ground several yards from the cliff. The descent into it is assisted by notches cut into the rock, by means of which a shallow platform is reached. Dim and cool is the cavern, where the organ tones of the sea perpetually reverberate; below is a spectral beach, where the waves gently roll the white pebbles, and curl round the slimy bases of the rocks like sinuous serpents. But in winter the breakers rage into the cavern, and spout upwards through the aperture like a geyser.

Away towards the Bill of Portland is a wild stretch of tumbled stones, jagged and grey, with never a human dwelling place to suggest the kindliness of man, the screaming notes of a gull alone giving voice to the desolation. Anne Garland made for this point

to view the *Victory*, with Bob Loveday on board, which she saw through the telescope of a kindly sailor. "The great silent ship, with her population of bluejackets, marines, officers and captain, and the admiral who was not to return alive, passed like a phantom the meridian of the Bill. . . . In course of time, the watching girl saw that the ship had passed her nearest point; the breadth of her sails diminished by foreshortening, till she assumed the form of an egg on end. After this, something seemed to twinkle, and Anne, who had previously withdrawn from the old sailor, went back to him and looked through the glass. The twinkling was the light falling upon the cabin windows of the ship's stern. . . . The *Victory* was fast dropping away. She was on the horizon, and soon appeared hull down." Seawards from this spot the foam line on the Race is seen even in summer calm, signifying the position of a shifting sandbank. It is called the Shambles, because, according to tradition, the lightship at the edge of the broken water denotes the site of the former slaughter-house of the ancient island, upon which the sea has encroached. The lighthouse, or "lower light," as it is termed, is left behind, and the southernmost point is the Bill, where all the natural characteristics are accentuated, and more direfully confused. On the edge of the shore is a stupendous fragment of stone

known as the Pulpit Rock, a designation which truly suggests its form.

Two or three nights after this walk, Pierston and Avice wandered to the ruined church in the grounds of Pennsylvania Castle. A rough trackway winds round this mansion (at one time the residence of the Bencombs in Mr. Hardy's Portland novel) and drops beneath the arch of the "Red King's Castle," known locally by the name of Bow and Arrow. This ruin is perched like a bird on a crag, and was erected by William II, its walls being pierced for archers. The path turns and falls beneath this crag to the remnants of a sixteenth century church, tottering on the brink of Church Hope cove, and in this solemn spot Pierston kissed Avice. Above them, Pennsylvania Castle slept in the green arms of the sycamores; this place was once owned and occupied by Mr. Granville Penn, its plain and stately architecture suggesting the solid virtues of the great Pilgrim Father.

Pierston observed that "every one of those who had brought Avice up had tried to get her away mentally as far as possible from her natural and individual life as an inhabitant of a peculiar island." Since the period of *The Well-Beloved*, the tendency to stifle the racial traits has become more pronounced. These island cloisters of an outworn age still form the background of a quaintly individual life, but they also ring with

music-hall melodies, and are disfigured with garish advertisements. Modern red brick terraces are displacing the old stone cottages, and the people are accustoming themselves to the presence of "kimberlins." Not yet is the gulf between Portlanders and "Outlanders" bridged, however; the natives live to themselves, in their hearts despising the modern men who are turning their little world upside down. 'Tis the tribute paid by them to their unique ancestry, and when their suspicion and dislike no longer exist, "the strange visionary race of the west" will be no more.

Budmouth Regis

Three miles from Portland lies the town of Weymouth and Melcombe Regis, otherwise the Budmouth Regis of the Wessex novels. Those wishing to elude the scuffle of modern existence can find a tranquil haven in this ancient seaport, which is enclosed from the view of the mainland by the Dorset Heights. Viewed from the offing on a summer's evening, Weymouth is a fairy haven of dreams floating on the edge of a beautiful bay, but this aspect conveys no idea of its salient characteristics, and is merely a pictorial compliment. The seaport is composed of two towns lying on either side of the harbour, Weymouth on the one side, and Melcombe Regis on

the other. It is affirmed that Tyrian merchants traded to these shores ere the legions of Rome invaded Britain. The Via Iceniana commenced here, and passing through the county town of Dorchester (Casterbridge), one of the oldest Roman settlements, proceeded inland. The Saxon Chronicles confirm the opinion that Weymouth was the scene of Athelstan's revenge on his half-brother, who had attempted to take his life. The town again and again figures in history during the succeeding centuries, and it always sent a large contingent of men and ships to swell the navies of England. In 1347 the town supplied twenty ships, with a complement of two hundred and sixty-four men, for the siege of Calais, an enterprise which the hearty sea-dogs must have prosecuted with relish, seeing that their coast was often harried by the French.

These attacks injured the town and impoverished the inhabitants to such an extent that Henry IV discharged them from their customs for twelve years. From the point of view of Parliamentary representation Weymouth was then the peer of London, and sent four burgesses to the national council. Many a glittering pageant has set sail from its shores; the pomp and splendour of war, and the solemn journeying of religious devotees, as when fifty pilgrims sailed from the port in 1413 to visit the shrine of

St. Jago of Compostella. Half a century afterwards the town was granted, in common with the citizens of London, powers to make a coroner, an escheator, and other officers. Again and again ancient records mention "Waymouth" in august connexions, till the very name shimmers with mediæval glamour. Contemplating a French invasion, Henry VIII called upon the bailiffs to "send us the nombre of xv hable foteman, well furneyshed for the warres, as appertayneth, whereof ii to be archers, everyone furneyshed with a goode bow in a cace, with xxii goode arrows in a cace, a goode sworde and a dagger and the rest to be billman, havyng besides their bill, a good sworde and a dagger, to be levyed of your own servants and tenants." About this period Sandesfoot Castle, near Weymouth, and overlooking Portland, was built by the king's command. It is mentioned by Leland as "a right goodlie Castel, havyng one open barbicane." This ruin was appointed by Pierston in *The Well-Beloved* as the meeting place where he should say his farewell to Avice Caro.

Undoubtedly the burgesses of this port could make good ships, and breed better men to man them. Ere the beacon on the tower of Wyke Church gave warning the Armada had been sighted, the town had supplied and manned six battleships, two being over eighty tons in burden, a remarkable ton-

nage at that time. A relic of this glorious sea fight is still to be seen in the gloomy Custom House, a Spanish treasure chest, battered and worn. Living was then singularly cheap; the best French wines were sold at 13*s.* 4*d.* a tun, an ox 48*s.*, a good fat hog 10*s.*, a fat wether with fleece 5*s.*, a fat goose 7½*d.*, a fat capon 6*d.*, a fat hen 3*d.*, four pigeons 3*d.*, and two dozen eggs 3*d.*

Until the reign of Elizabeth Weymouth and Melcombe Regis were two distinct towns with separate charters, but they only had one harbour between them, and the disputes over the allocation of dues led to many a hostile encounter; these contentions, however, ceased when the two boroughs were incorporated in the reign of Good Queen Bess. Embroiled in the Civil Wars, the town espoused the cause of Charles I, a house near the quay bearing witness to these heated contests in the shape of a cannon ball firmly imbedded in the wall.

Amongst its Parliamentary representatives Weymouth has numbered Sir Christopher Wren, Sir Thomas Thornhill, Sir William Penn, and John Ward, an obscure worthy who ought to be remembered on the strength of the following extraordinary prayer which was found among his papers, dated 1727: "Oh, Lord, Thou knowest that I have nine houses in the city of London, and that I have lately purchased an estate in fee simple in Essex; I beseech Thee to

preserve the two counties of Middlesex and Essex from fires and earthquakes; and as I also have a mortgage at Hertfordshire, I beg of Thee also to have an eye of compassion on that county, and for the rest of the counties Thou mayest deal with them as Thou art pleased. Oh, Lord, enable the bank to answer all their bills, and make all my debtors good men. Give a prosperous voyage and safe return to the *Mermaid* sloop, because I have not insured it; and because Thou hast said 'The days of the wicked are but short,' I trust in Thee that Thou wilt not forget Thy promise, as I have an estate in reversion which will be mine on the death of that profligate young man, Sir J. L——g. Keep my friends from sinking, preserve me from thieves and housebreakers, and make all my servants so honest and faithful that they may always attend to my interest, and never cheat me out of my property night or day."

Little more than a century ago the modern town of Weymouth was but an assemblage of fishermen's huts. The thoroughfares were straggling, the houses two-storied, the roofs thatched. In 1789 it was visited by George III, who henceforth made it his constant summer resort, taking up his quarters at Gloucester Lodge, now used as an hotel. In and out of the entrance hall once dawdled perfumed exquisites, daintily handling Malacca canes, and anon pinching

snuff from jewelled boxes. Its sober exterior has formed the background of many a greeting between stately dames, rouged, patched, and beruffled, and brilliantly attired gentlemen of the Court. Ceremonious bows were interchanged, laughter pealed, swords clanked, and delicate brows were arched. Imagination follows these fair creatures as they took the air by the shore in the morning, the ladies affectedly nervous lest the wavelets should sprinkle their brocades, the gentlemen aptly improving the occasion with jest and witty reflection. Or the quality would visit His Majesty's bath in St. Thomas Street, where the salt water was pumped from the sea for the royal ablutions. When evening came they would cross the harbour for a stately dance in the Old Rooms, where many a slow measured minuet has been trodden, or perhaps attend a courtly function at Gloucester Lodge. Henceforth the "quality" flocked to the town, and mansions soon adorned the sea front, where a modest theatre was also erected, but little trace of it now exists.

The Old Rooms, or the Weymouth Rooms, as they were called, still exist, though in a dilapidated condition. Of the entertainments that were held there, a quaint insight is obtained from the rules that were drawn up for their conduct about the year 1801 :

I. That Gentlemen are not to appear in the rooms

neither on Tuesday or Friday Evenings in Boots; or Ladies in Riding Habits.

II. That the Ball shall begin as soon as possible after Seven o'Clock, and finish precisely at Eleven.

III. That Gentlemen and Ladies who dance down a Country Dance shall not quit their places till the dance is finished, unless they mean to dance no more that night.

IV. That no Lady or Gentleman can be permitted to dance in colored Gloves.

V. That after a Lady has called a Dance and danced it down, her place in the next Dance is at the bottom.

VI. That no Tea Table be carried into the Card Room.

VII. That Gentlemen will be pleased to leave their Swords at the Door.

VIII. That no Dogs be admitted.

T. RODBER, M.C.

The magnetism of the kingly presence also drew Anne Garland and the Trumpet Major to the town, when they stationed themselves opposite the summer palace of England's monarch, and saw the scene pictured in Madame D'Arblay's diary. "They have dressed out every street with labels 'God save the King.' The bathing machines make it their mottoes over all their windows, and those bathers that belong

to the Royal dippers wear it in bandeaus on their bonnets to go into the sea, and have it again in large letters round their waists to encounter the waves. Think of the surprise of His Majesty when . . . he had no sooner popped his royal head under the water than a band of music concealed in a neighbouring machine struck up 'God save Great George our King.'" Another amusing incident occurred when the mayor and burgesses came to present an address of respectful welcome. To the astonishment of all present, the mayor, who had been cautioned to kneel at the crucial moment, advanced, and took the Queen's hand as he might that of any lady mayoress. "You should have knelt, sir," said Colonel Gwynn. "Sir," answered the poor mayor, "I cannot." "Everybody does, sir." "Sir, I have a wooden leg."

Many stories are current regarding His Majesty's sojourn in the town, and most of them throw some light on the character of the king, and are informed with the quaint spirit of the times. A countryman having been told that the king's arms were a lion and a unicorn, one on the right and the other on the left, declared his unbelief, and determined to see for himself. But when he found the king's arms like those of other men, he raged at his informants for sending him a long way to see a man nothing different in arms or legs to any other person. In one of His Majesty's

excursions into the neighbourhood during the hay harvest, he passed a field where only one woman was at work, and asked her "where the rest of her companions were?" With much *naïveté* the woman replied, "They have gone to see the king." "And why did you not go with them?" rejoined His Majesty. "I would not give a pin to see him," rejoined the peasant; "besides, the fools that are gone to town to see him will lose a day's work by it, which is more than I can afford to do, for I have five children to work for." "Well, then," replied George, putting some money into her hands, "you may tell your companions who are gone to see the king, that the king came to see you." Frequent marine excursions were taken by the royal visitor, and on one of these occasions a sailor was inspired to write the following song, which was sung before His Majesty and danced to the tune of a hornpipe:

Portland road the king aboard, the king aboard,
Portland road the king aboard;
We weighed and sailed from Portland Road.

The king he sat with a smile on his face, a smile on his face,
The king he sat with a smile on his face,
To see the after guard splice the main brace.

The princesses sat upon the skids, upon the skids,
The princesses sat upon the skids,
To see the middies play with the kids.

The news of Lord Nelson's victory at the mouth of the Nile was brought to George III whilst he was riding on the adjoining down, and not having the key of the despatch box with him, he was obliged to content himself with an oral description until his return to Gloucester Lodge, where he was met by the queen, to whom he told the news. After the perusal of the despatches the king good-humouredly walked through the streets, accosting every one he knew and telling them the glad tidings. The Proclamation of Peace was signalized by an open-air dance, in which the four members of Parliament for the borough and their families took part, the couples extending the whole length of the main street. The relief at the fall of the Man of Destiny in this district was intense, for according to Granfer Cantle, on one occasion it was even "thoughted Boney had landed round the point."

Well known to all the country side was the royal watering place in those days, and especially to the villagers of Sutton, the Overcombe of the *Trumpet Major*. Bob Loveday knew its harbour, the gallant John Loveday its barracks, and Anne Garland its fashions. Fess Derriman cut "a fine figure of a soldier" on the esplanade, and Uncle Benjy after a brief holiday complained: "'Tis a shilling for this and a shilling for that; if you only eat one egg or even a poor windfall of an apple, you've got to pay . . .

King George hev ruined the town for other folks." The accidental firing of a beacon and the adventures of Derriman as a trooper with the Yeomanry Cavalry suggest a story told about the same regiment when at drill on one occasion. "When I say draw," shouted the serjeant, "don't 'ee draw; but when I say draw swords, out wi' 'em wi' a swish." A reminiscence of the soldiery who were encamped on the Dorset Heights is also found in the churchyard of the tiny hamlet of Bincombe, where lies the body of a dragoon who accidentally fell from the cliffs.

But the connexion of the ancient borough with the Wessex novels has an importance by no means confined to the *Trumpet Major*. Here Pierston stayed when the fleeting light found a temporary incarnation in Miss Bencomb, the daughter of his father's trade rival. It was the foster town of the two orphans, Owen and Cytherea Graye, their residence in "Budmouth Regis" bringing them in contact with Edward Springrove, an acquaintanceship of much significance to the girl, after her chance meeting with him at "Lulstead Cove"—a volcanic land-locked bay in the locality known as Lulworth Cove. Eustacia Vye's early knowledge of the town's gaieties proved a shaping influence fraught with disaster, when she came to look for colour to match it on desolate Egdon, and here it was Wildeve once sat behind a brass plate,

informing the world he was an engineer. George Somerset stayed in an hotel on the quay on his way to Cherbourg. Fitzpiers landed in the harbour from the Continent, after leaving Felice Charmond, and hither fled Manston after the discovery of the murder. Into the town rode honest Dick Dewy with beehives for Mrs. Maybold, when such delightful consequences followed his chance meeting with Fancy Day in St. Mary Street, and Captain Newson settled here after his roving life.

The phantoms of Mr. Hardy's creations seem to haunt the streets, and do not seem out of place in their old-fashioned garb, because of the old-world aroma imparted to Weymouth by Georgian influence and tradition. His late Majesty beams affably from a gilt statue; his effigy is cut in colossal proportions on the downs, and his royal baths and former residence picture forth in stone the ambling and ponderous ceremonials of the latter end of the eighteenth century. Even until very recent years, a man who used to beat the carpets on which the kingly boots fell could be seen occasionally tottering along the thoroughfares, carrying with him to the grave the afterglow of courtly functions.

In the competitive race the town has been a laggard, though its pace is now being quickened by modern requirements. Except in the height of the season,

there is little traffic in its streets, which in other towns would be termed lanes, so narrow are they. The town crier still goes his rounds in gorgeous uniform, shattering the stillness with the clang of his bell, and shouting "God save the King" when the announcement is ended, while the stocks are on view in an alcove of the Guildhall. Only a few years ago many of the shops were but low built dwelling houses, with the goods exposed to view in the bow windows, with here and there an Elizabethan edifice, probably occupied by lineal descendants of the first builders and owners of them. Tourists come and go, enjoy its diversions, and grumble at the jog-trot pace of things, with neither eyes nor ears for the elements no company or financial corporation can impart to a town. Like a rock in the midst of a torrent the progressive spirit has flowed by, leaving the ancient seaport comparatively untouched, the phenomenon of this being apparent when it is known that the inhabitants number nearly twenty thousand.

Even to-day there exists a detachment and aloofness from modern usages and thought, and a self-centredness that militates against its advance in the favour of the go-ahead holiday public. The calm which generally broods over the reaches of the harbour, and the idle degenerate High Street of the old town, once such a centre of business and fashion, is interpreted

by the corpse of its former town hall, now renovated and turned to uses other than municipal; this calm is not the tranquillity of suspended animation, but the vacant noiselessness of death, not repugnant to the senses, but fragrant with the breath of other centuries. The trade of the port has woefully declined, and is chiefly maintained by a flourishing line of local pleasure steamers, and the boats engaged in the Jersey traffic; the ship-yards, where such brave craft were fashioned, are either silent or converted to other ends. Along the quays flit leisurely officials, never too hurried for social amenities, and old men with the zest of the sea in their eyes and the salt of it in their blood, who are sometimes found hovering beneath a sere wall, bearing a faded announcement about some superseded "Steam Packet Service." Those in pursuit of flamboyant pleasures must seek them elsewhere, but those with hearts and minds tuned to the minor melody of things, who can see a rose when they smell its perfume, will here find repose as healthy as it is charming.

Casterbridge

Some towns, like human beings, have individualities and moods of their own not to be forgotten, while others are too featureless to make any impression on the beholder. Dorchester, however, has a charm and vividness of appeal in its personality almost equal to the famous mayor in the Wessex novel which deals with his career. It is a composite town, infused with the essence of widely sundered ages; it is a miniature Rome on English soil, where tokens of the distant centuries and the men who made them great are continually being exposed to the rays of the modern sun. Contemplation of this ancient borough flashes an avenue of light into the dim realm of receded eras, where ancient Britain and Rome lie engulfed. Here and there, in Dorchester, islands of the past rear their hoary presence; but although there is contact, there is no communion between them and the present day.

In an edifice in High Street Judge Jeffreys lodged on the occasion when he held the Bloody Assize; it is a visualized spectre of an alien age, seemingly insulated against time's corrosion. Even to-day the town masquerades in a polyglot garb, composed of structures widely differing in age and style; and

passing grizzled witnesses to things that were, the mind is tuned to wistfulness. Fine old houses abound, and point to the time when the neighbouring gentry periodically spent a season in Dorchester, and routs and balls were the order of the day. The very names of the thoroughfares and lanes are sound-pictures of times more or less remote, such as Icen Way, Friary Lane, Durngate Street, and Bowling Green Alley, the latter name, especially, carrying with it the redolence of blythe memories.

Everywhere are emphatic traces of Durnovaria, as Dorchester was termed by the Romans; below the modern streets are the trackways where the cohorts marched; beneath the foundations of some of the houses are tesselated pavements worn by the feet of centurions and legionaries, and mingled with the earth in the fields are vestiges of the utensils they used. Open the ground almost anywhere, and Roman life is still found existing in mute survivals of their handiwork. The town is generally supposed to have been a fortified camp, and a remnant of one of the old walls still remains; the width of it once allowed for the passage of two armed men, although the existing fragment offers no hint of its former thickness. According to their general practice, the Romans excavated an immense dry moat around the town, and constructed Maumbury Rings, or the

Amphitheatre, with the vast quantities of chalk then dug out. This earthwork was built in the time of Agricola, and is capable of accommodating twelve thousand spectators, and it was in the shadow of this monument of brutal sport that Michael Henchard first met his wife after parting with her at Weydon Priors.

Cloth manufacture flourished in Dorchester in the reigns of Elizabeth, Charles I and James I, and the merchandise shipped from Weymouth "challenged the superiority of all this shire," according to the old county history. On the outbreak of the wars with France and the prohibition of French wines, malting and brewing were carried on extensively, and large quantities of excellent beer were sent to London, among other places, where it was held in high regard as a beverage. But only faint echoes of the town are heard till the time of the Civil War, when the burgesses emerged and ranged themselves on the side of the Parliamentarians in the great struggle. There are reports of vigilant watchings at night, methodical shutting of the town gates, and constant military activity, succeeded by an honourable capitulation to the Earl of Caernarvon, and looming among the somewhat mythical stories of the time lours the implacable visage of the great Protector. Of the inconspicuous town life of this

period, William Whiteway's diary chronicles a gruesome incident touching a fire. "One man was burnt, who, running home all black and deformed by the flames, and being followed by some friends who laboured to stay him, to have him drest, was met by Jaspard Arnold. He, thinking him to be some felon, had a pole in his hands, and beat him with it grievously and struck him down; he died within two days. The King's Majesty granted for it a collection over all England."

A disaster which overtook the town in 1613 proved of a far graver nature, and eliminated all concern for national issues, for the fire which then occurred almost reduced Dorchester to a heap of ashes. An account of this catastrophe is contained in a pamphlet entitled *Fire from Heaven*, which was evidently written by an eye-witness of it: "The instrument of God's wrath began first to take hold in a Tradesmans worke house. . . . Then began the cry of fier to be spread through the whole town; man woman and childe ran amazedly up and down the streetes, calling for water, so fearfully, as if death's trumpet had sounded a command of present destruction. The fier began between the hours of two and three in the afternoone, the wind blowing very strong, and increased so mightily that, in very short space, the most part of the town was fiered, which burned

so extreamely, the weather being hot, and the houses dry, that help of man grew almost past. . . . The reason the fier at the first prevailed above the strength of man, was that it unfortunately happened in the time of harvest, when people were most busied in the reaping of their corne, and the towne most emptyest; but when this burnyng Beacon of ruyne gave the harvestmen light into the field, little booted it to them to stay, but in more than reasonable hast poasted they homeward, not only for the safeguard of their goods and houses, but for the preservation of their wives and children, more dearer than all temporall estate or worldly abundance. In like manner the inhabitantes of the neighbouring townes and villages at the fearful sight (of the) red blazing element, ran in multitudes to assist them, proffering the deare adventure of their lives to oppresse the rigour of the fier, but all too late they came, and to small purpose showed they their willing minds, for almost every streete was filled with flame, every place borning beyond help and recovery. Their might they in wofull manner behold marchants warehouses full of riches commodities on a flaming fier, garners of breade corn consuming, multitudes of woollen and Linnen Clothes burned into ashes, Gold and Silver melted with Brasse, Pewter and Copper, tronkes and chestes of Damaskes and fine linnens, with all manner

of rich stuffs, made fewell to increase this universe sole conquerour. . . . The fierceness of the fier was such that it even burnet and schorhet trees as they grew, and converted their green liveries into black burned garments, not so much as Hearbes and Flowers Flourishing in Gardaynes, but were in a moment withered with the heat of the fier. . . . Dorchester was a famous towne, now a heape of ashes for travellers that passe by to sigh at. Oh, Dorchester, wel maist thou mourn for those thy great losses, for never had English Towne the like unto thee . . . A loss so unrecoverable, that valesse the whole land in pitty set to their devotions, it is like never to reobtaine the former estate, but continue like ruinated Troy, or decayed Carthage. God in His mercy raise the inhabitantes up againe, and graunt that by the mischance of this Towne both us, they and all others may repent us of our sins. Amen."

Several Dorchester men suffered as rebels in the Monmouth Rebellion, when Judge Jeffreys added to the reputation of diabolism gained by him at the Winchester Assize. In accordance with his behest, the Court Room was hung in scarlet, and there it was he jested while pretending to examine two hundred and ninety two prisoners, eighty of whom were sentenced to an atrocious death, the remainder being sent as slaves to the plantations.

The manor of Fordington at the eastern end of the town is closely associated with the *Mayor of Casterbridge*, where it seems to be indicated under the name of Durnover. "Here wheat ricks overhung the old Roman street, and thrust their eaves against the church tower; green-thatched barns with doorways as high as the gates of Solomon's temple, opened directly upon the main thoroughfare. Barns, indeed, were so numerous, as to alternate with every half a dozen houses along the way. Here lived burgesses who daily walked the fallow—shepherds in an intramural squeeze." Henchard dealt largely with the small farmers of this neighbourhood in the height of his prosperity, and when broken and defeated in heart and purpose, he idled among the other castaways who gathered on its two bridges, which are still haunted by the human wrecks of town life. Donald Farfrae and Elizabeth-Jane were also acquainted with the locality, though were they now given bodily life to view it, they would hardly recognize this haunt. Here, however, the transition from town to country life is yet abrupt. Rural and urban life are juxtaposed; the meadows spread a green carpet almost to the shop doors, where money chinks to the sound of agricultural machines, and the horse bells chime and mingle with the voices of the tradesmen.

The land on the manor of Fordington was held by

an ancient system of tenure, but in 1842 the Duchy of Cornwall, to which it belongs, resolved to refuse the application of the copyholders for "renewing lives"—a system frequently referred to by Mr. Hardy, which is now almost extinct. Each copyholder held his land, whatever its extent, on three lives, and on the termination of one of them he went to the next Manor Court, and asked permission to insert another, and this concession used to be granted on payment of a fine, which varied according to the size of the holding. Connected with this Manor Court were the Hayward, Constable and Reeve, or Foreman of the Homage. The Hayward's duties consisted, among others, in penning stray sheep and controlling the leazing, never allowed, however, until all the corn was carried, and only then did this official perambulate the streets with a bell, giving notice that the leazing was open. It fell to the lot of the Reeve and the Constable to report the lapse of lives, and attend to other official business; these were the "Duchy folk," about whom fascinating Wessex stories could be told.

In pre-railroad times, the three thousand and ninety-seven acres of the Manor did not contain a foot of fencing, the limits of the holdings being marked by strips of unploughed land. All the corn had to be carted to the homesteads in Fordington, and

hence it came about that the neighbourly Dorchester folk used to lend a hand to Fordington farmers in times of pressure, a kindly disposition remarked upon by Mr. Thomas Hardy.

Dorchester is the Mecca of the countryside, and thither generations of rural pilgrims have flocked for business and pleasure on market days, when South Street is lined with carriers' vans, and the complaints of driven animals make the borough sound like a farmyard. The homeward journeys of the farmers are brightened by many a merry story, and one told about a carter, which convulsed a select party of agriculturists, bears testimony to the latent humour of the natives. It appears that one hot morning in July a carter was slouching along a lane behind two heavy-footed horses. Oppressed by the heat of the sun he turned aside to a gate and leant over it for a few moments, and then continuing his way, noticed that the quadrupeds were about to take a wrong turning, and descrying a lad in the distance, shouted; "Hi! there, just speak a word to they 'osses." With imperturbable gravity the boy stepped aside and said: "Marnen, 'osses," and allowed them to wander on in the wrong direction.

Creedle, the handy man employed by Giles Winterborne, had lively recollections of "hang-fairs," as he termed the public executions which used to take

place over the gateway of the county jail ; and well he might, inasmuch as they formed an excuse for a day's revelry in the principal market town. The day of an execution was anticipated with no little impatience and satisfaction, and people from far and near, rustics and respectable tradesmen alike, came to witness it. One who saw a public execution here as a boy speaks of the open space in front of the prison being thronged by sightseers, while the windows commanding unobstructed views were occupied by parties of friends, who made this spectacle the *chef d'œuvre* of the day's holiday fare. When the criminal appeared on the scaffold the throng huddled together like driven sheep ; hastily opened windows rattled, women hysterically sobbed, and the air was deadened by the minatory toll of the death knell. Suddenly the crowd became one body, tense and still, and then forgot the tragic moment, and dispersed to discuss the crime in taverns.

To a certain extent, Dorchester counts only one day to its week—market day, when the whole town is thrilled and energized in its efforts to supply the necessities of the country folks. But even the importance of a market day pales before the tremendous import of Martinmas Hiring Fair, when the labourers go in search of masters for the ensuing year. It is the congregation of the living parts of the agri-

cultural machine whose daily pulsations send the wholesome farm produce into the cities. Since the time Gabriel Oak sought engagement as a shepherd at the annual fair, milkmaids no longer come to it and stand in a row awaiting masters for the ensuing year, but the broad aspects of Hiring Day have undergone no material change. The cattle market is then a vortex of men and beasts, who noisily bewilder one another; the prevalent hue of the sky at this season of the year tones with the dun habiliments of the rustic throng. Ranged on one side of the yard are agricultural implements; stout farmers surround them, their sturdy legs begaitered, and chaffer with the salesmen, striking their hands with switches to emphasize arguments. Ubiquitous pedlars and dealers shout the merits of their wares, and these sounds are mingled with the bellow of cattle and the cry of drovers. In circular pens auctioneers proclaim the merits of pathetically confused cows, who are prodded round and round the ring, which is zoned by a crowd of red-faced men. Carters wander in and out of the throng with a whip-lash threaded through their hat-band in sign of their calling, and pause to overhear the remarks of a farmer who is negotiating with a shepherd leaning ruminatively on his crook. His fingers work nervously and the farmer's lips tighten till they appear thin as a pencil

line, and then the shepherd slouches away unhired, in company with an anxious-eyed woman. Other farmers stroll about with important mien. To-day their voices reek with dignity, and portly men are quite inflated by the idea of mastership, and thin men are more nice in considering a labourer's points than in choosing a blood mare. One and all prod cattle, discuss crops, and cast critical glances at the patient rustics waiting, with the grave-eyed wonder of cattle, their annual hiring. In the background hover women and children, who carry the day's food in wicker baskets. The children deem this event a holiday, when carefully saved pennies can be spent in fairings; gingerbread dolls are in great juvenile favour because of the delight of biting off their heads, though cows and sheep are not despised. A crown of joy is not wanting to the day, which is finally consummated by the process of being jambed into a carrier's van and driven home.

So suggestive are Dorchester streets of Mr. Hardy's works that the romantic wayfarer feels he is taking an expurgated part in *The Mayor of Casterbridge.* Near St. Peter's Church is a large old-fashioned mansion which seems to correspond to Lucetta's residence—High Place Hall. In the centre of the wall flanking the garden is an archway, now bricked up, surmounted by a battered mask. Elizabeth-Jane

saw it: "Originally the mask had exhibited a comic leer, as could still be discerned; but generations of Casterbridge boys had thrown stones at the mask, aiming at its open mouth; and the blows thereof had chipped off the lips and jaws as if they had been eaten away by disease." The comfortable bay windows of the old coaching inn *King's Arms* vivify recollections of Henchard, who dined there on the memorable occasion of the banquet when he threw down the challenge, taken up by Farfrae with such alacrity. Dorchester is the arterial centre of the Wessex novels. Each notable building suggests a personality; Boldwood and Manston are wedded by memory to the county jail, Bathsheba diffidently entered the Corn Exchange, and poor Fanny Robin tottered to the door of the Union. Hither came hale Bob Loveday in haste to be married, and rustics on business or pleasure, these visits being the means of imbuing them with their only notions of town life. Sergeant Troy was educated at the Grammar School established by Thomas Hardy, who was the ancestor of all the Dorset Hardys, chief among them being the Wessex novelist, and the heroic friend of Nelson.

Eight miles distant from the Wessex novelist's home is the village of Puddletown, known by the name of Weatherbury in *Far from the Madding Crowd*. The church therein described remains intact, but Warren's

Malthouse disappeared twenty-five years ago. Mellstock, which is mentioned so delightfully in *Under the Greenwood Tree*, has several points of resemblance with another hamlet in the vicinity—Stinsford—where sylvan life shows as charming a face to-day as it did in the time of sweet Fancy Day.

Anglebury

Known to readers of *The Return of the Native* and *The Hand of Ethelberta* under the name of Anglebury, Wareham is intimately enwoven into the warp and woof of the Wessex dreams. It is the town from whence Thomassin fled in the reddleman's cart, when the defect was discovered in the marriage licence which postponed her union with Wildeve. In company with Lady Petherwin, Ethelberta stayed at the principal inn, and wandering one evening in the vicinity, she met Christopher Julian, an old admirer, who made her ultimately sigh for freedom of action in the bestowal of her affections.

In choosing the fictitious name of Anglebury, Mr. Hardy showed a fine and suggestive comprehension of the town's antiquity. Wareham had a being in British times, under the name of Durngueis, and it figured as a noted town in the Saxon age, when it was fortified

with a strength that was recognized by friends and foes alike. Continually was it assaulted and molested by the Danes, until the demands of constant defence wearied the Saxons of the district. According to Collier, "When Guthrun, a Danish chief, made a descent upon Wareham, in Dorsetshire, only a few dispirited men could be gathered around the banner of the Golden Dragon. To fight was useless or impossible." Another Danish army invested it in 876, when the whole town was destroyed, but eventually King Alfred marched his troops to the rescue. "That prince so straightened them (the Danes) in these quarters, that they were content to come to a treaty with him, and stipulated to depart the country." The presence of this monarch and his warriors tranquillized the town and restored it to prosperity, a ruined nunnery being then rebuilt by Alfred's daughter. But the invasions soon re-commenced, partly because Wareham was then a seaport and offered a fine landing place for the Danish hordes, who recked nothing of the town ramparts. The existence of a mint within its borders founded by Athelstan must also have been an inducement to the invaders, who generally captured a good store of plunder on their depredatory visits.

When the Danes were swept away by the Normans, Wareham was of sufficient importance to be among the

manors retained by the Conqueror. The work of restoration then commenced, the one-time castle was then erected, and Corfe Castle considerably enlarged. A portion of the manor was bestowed on the Earl of Leicester, and, in after time, a descendant of that house, Earl Gilbert, established a claim to certain privileges, the gallows amongst them, which he maintained were his by ancestral right. The eighteenth century historian of the county, Hutchins, states: "Wareham Castle was famous for the imprisonment and death of Robert de Belesme, Earl of Montgomery, who, rebelling against Henry I, he brought him from Reresburg, in Normandy, and committed him, *sub actissima custodia*, to this castle, where he starved himself to death. He was the greatest, richest, and wickedest man of his age." War again plunged the town in misery and bloodshed; in 1138 the castle was occupied by the Empress Maud, and then by Stephen, who created his son William Governor of it. John visited Wareham in 1208, and it was at this period that one Peter Pomfret and his son were dragged hence from Corfe Castle to be executed for making a false prediction concerning the termination of the king's reign. Subsequently the town suffered in the struggle between John and the barons, when the castle was destroyed and never rebuilt. Again and again during the succeeding periods historic names are



THE TURBERVILLE AISLE AND TOMBS IN BERE REGIS CHURCH

Photo by Flisher, Weymouth

mentioned in connexion with the borough. In 1291 Edward I here superintended the manning and victualling of ships for a projected continental expedition; the profits from the salmon fishery were settled on Catherine of Arragon as a dowry, and this source of revenue she retained after her divorce.

During the Civil Wars Wareham was a counter bandied between Royalists and Roundheads, its fortunes being reflected in the fate of its rector, who, in addition to sustaining a wound in the head, suffered imprisonment nineteen times. His son William, who distinguished himself as an ensign in the royal cause, obtained a permit to visit his native town couched in the following terms: "Suffer the bearer hereof, Ensigne Wake, with his horses and other necessaries, passe your guard to Blandford or Wareham in Dorsetshire, without let or molestation, there to remaine, he havinge engaged himself not to bear arms against the Parliament without first rendering himself a prisoner to the Parliament's forces. Given under my hand and seale this xijth of May, 1646. Fairfax."

Wareham seems to have been the chief place of execution in the neighbourhood; after the failure of the Monmouth Rebellion three victims were sent there to pay the penalty for their ill-judged zeal.

They were hung on a spot called Bloody Bank, their quarters were exposed on the bridge, and their heads nailed to a wooden tower on the site of the present Town Hall. The heads were subsequently stolen and hidden under a bed, where they escaped the vigilance of the officers who searched the house, and by this means decent burial was obtained for the pathetic relics.

Here the historic era of Wareham came to an end, and a garment of quietude descended on the town whose career had been so chequered. Gone are the ships, and the sea whereon they sailed has receded, until only antiquarians know that down to the beginning of the fifteenth century Wareham was a busy seaport. Now, only the presence of the river and the shallow barges on its bosom suggest the existence of the ocean. Hushed are the streets, or the street, for there is but one worthy of the name; those passing to and fro move sedately, and loiter for the exchange of gossip and news; the hectic activities of the great world are here unrealized rumours echoed in the news-sheets. Against the banks the river rests in apathy, seemingly too inert to stir the barges; beneath the rays of the sun, the water boils with light, and the brown sails droop against the green of fields, while here and there a man lounges in the shadow of an unpretentious warehouse.

Evening wakes the river and mantles it in cloth of gold borrowed from the sunset. Two by two the burgesses issue forth, man and wife; lovers' trysts are kept, and taverns begin to fill with those who prefer to look at life through an alcoholic haze. When winter rains drench the town, there are few signs of activity; like a face decayed by time the sky peers at the sodden thoroughfares, whose pulse-beat is at an ebb. Then Wareham seems to recollect its diminished condition, and wears an air of defeat. It is shrouded by the incubus of the unremembered and the lonely, which seems to steal from the seat of the mediæval seaport; it dreams of the high-decked galleons floating across the dim waterway into the superseded harbour; of the piles of costly merchandise on the wharf and the irruption of swarthy sailors from foreign ports into the borough; of the mustering of maritime volunteers and the presence of regal men in armour, who point significantly to war vessels being unloosed from their moorings, and speak valorous words about France. Women from the town throng the wharf when the men from among them clamber into the hold, and as the rhythmic palpitations of the oars begin, the brave dames of England hover at the water's edge, and calmly stand and gaze while the men they love sail forth to engage the ships of France.

The Wareham of to-day is only the modern framework to an antique picture, whose faded lineaments glimmer with meanings to the contemplative sense, though it only shows the stagnant visage of death to the pilgrims of amusement. One class bestows a passing glance upon it; the other would be drawn to linger through the summer days in meditation, and then wander back to the city home, there to gloat over the treasure given them by the vigil.

Concerning the Turbervilles of Kingsbere

The name of Turberville now enjoys more widespread renown under the slightly altered form of D'Urberville than ever it did in the days of the knightly family's power, when they intermarried with half the great houses of the land, and owned extensive possessions in different parts of England. The oldest version of the name is De Turbida Villa; the family descended from Sir Payne de Turberville, who came over with the Conqueror. The founder of the family aided Robert FitzHamon in the conquest of Glamorganshire, in which county a lineal descendant of this ancient line is now residing, though the patronymic is changed into Turbeyfield. Branching out, the

family settled in various districts—some in Berkshire, others in Wilts and Dorset. The Turbervilles make an early appearance in the Pipe Rolls referring to the county, there being several records during the reigns of Henry I and Henry II and Stephen. Those connected with Bere Regis, to which Mr. Hardy has given its ancient title, Kingsbere, do not seem to have settled there until the time of Henry III. Hutchins states: "John de Turberville, with Isabel his wife, jointly enfeoffed, by the gift of Nich. de Wymondele, held lands, etc., in Bere, of the Earl of Hereford, by service of the fourth part of a fee, and paying yearly to the king at Michaelmas by the hands of the sheriff of Dorset, 4*s.* anciently levied by the circuit of the king's justices de foresta, for a transgression which the ancestors of the said John committed, in the limits of the forest of Bere, by enclosing some of the fee of the said earl in his own ground." What a sidelight this extract flashes on the personality of the family, and the might of their position. If the forbears of John de Turberville dealt thus with the land of such a great nobleman as the Earl of Hereford, men of lesser mark must have found them equivocable neighbours. In the reign of Edward III Richard came to the front, and was granted the twentieth part of a knight's fee in Bere "for aid in making the Black Prince a knight." One member of

the family, D'Albigny Turberville, M.D., whose tomb is in Salisbury Cathedral and bears the date 1696, was an oculist of no mean repute, and numbered Pepys among his patients. Century after century the family added field to field and house to house, until by the time of Elizabeth they owned the whole of the manor of "Kynge's Bere," profits from Woodbury Hill fair, and a great deal of other property in the neighbourhood. The gradual decay of this knightly house in the days of Elizabeth would form a splendid theme for the romancist, though there are no existing memorials of the decline, and conjectures would have to be founded on the evident dominance of masterful passion and cautious lawlessness which seem to have characterized the race.

This supposition is partly deduced from a careful scrutiny of the two portraits of the Turbervilles in the grange which formerly belonged to them—Woolbridge—the Wellbridge of the famous Wessex novel, and the scene of Tess' fatal confession to Angel Clare. There is also another Turberville mansion at Winterborne Abbas. The paintings are inserted in the walls at either end of a corridor, where these two dimly shadowed ladies have been staring at one another for three hundred years. Mere coloured figures they are not; the unknown artist has bodied forth the family vices on the canvas, and

painted, not only what he saw with his mind, but the prevalent conception of the Turbervilles as mirrored in contemporary estimation. While the beholder studies the picture, the visage seems to materialize and emerge from the dim colouring; resident in the countenance is a power subversive of energy; the massive hooked nose and fleshy lips distil a brutalizing influence, and burn themselves into the brain. No wonder Tess shuddered at the sight of her ancestor; nor is the countenance of the other portrait more reassuring, the treacherous smirk on her attenuated features touching the beholder with vague uneasiness.

The gabled grange in which these relics are housed forms a fitting counterpart to them, for it seems to be impregnated with the spirit of the former owners, and to be steeped in an atmosphere of moonless nights. The house once belonged to the abbey of Bindon, and at the Dissolution it passed through the hands of Sir Thomas Poynings to John Turberville, who had possession of it in the reign of Queen Elizabeth. Its remote position saved it from molestation during the Civil Wars, though it was provisionally garrisoned in 1644.

It is said that a spectre coach and four drives out from the grange in the gloom of evening, but that it can only be seen by those who have Turberville

blood in their veins. An anecdote is told of a gentleman who, passing across the old Elizabethan bridge on his way to dine with a friend, saw the ghostly coach. On arriving at his destination he spoke of it, and inquired into the identity of the eccentric individual who used a queer old-fashioned four in hand with outriders. Much to his astonishment he heard that it was the Turberville coach. Perhaps his reflections on hearing this news were not pleasant, as the old blood ran in his veins, and the sight of the phantom is said to bode disaster to the descendant to whom it appears.

The dust of the Turbervilles rests in the family vault in the south transept of the church of St. John the Baptist at Bere Regis. Here are two defaced altar tombs, with the memorial window containing the family arms and quarterings, dating back to the year 1600. A flat stone in the aisle bears the following inscription in old English characters: "Hic jacet Robertus Turbervyle, armiger, qui tempore suo procuravit alteram dimidiatam partem hujus manerii de Bere Regis (post dissolutionem abbatie de Tarrant) et eandem adjecit, ac univet hereditario patrimonio antecessorum suorum, ad longa tempora dominorum hujus manerii. Qui quidem Robertus obiit, quinto die Aprilis, anno Domine 1559, cujus anime propicietur clementissimus Jesus Christus. Amen."

Shrouded in a coloured gauze of light from the stained glass window is a large blue stone inscribed : "Ostium sepulchri antiquae familae Turbeville 24 June 1710," the year in which the last of the race was laid to rest in this tomb. The restoration of the fabric in 1875 necessitated the opening of the vault. In several instances coffins and bones had crumbled into a snuff-coloured powder, though tokens of pomp still clung to some of the less decayed shells. As the investigations proceeded, the air became laden with the rarefied presence of the dead, their earthly atoms floating upward like clouds of sickly incense. Resting against the bleached bones of a slight skeleton was a piece of silk, the fragmentary remains of feminine apparel which the dainty Turberville fingers could never remove. Ere the tomb was closed again several of the skeletons were re-coffined, together with the knights who had dwindled into absolute dust.

Near the largest altar tomb on the outside wall there is a bricked-up doorway. The legend of its origin is linked to a Turberville who quarrelled with the parson of that day, and swore he would never enter the old church doors again. Time wore on, and he kept his word, but at length the force of Sabbatic custom caused him to devise a way by which he could worship without breaking his vow, and thereupon resorted to the expedient of cutting a doorway in the

wall, through which he entered the family pew. It was beneath this blocked doorway that the Durbeyfields encamped, within view of the broad field where the splendid mansion of the Turbervilles stood. This lordly residence was demolished at the passing of the first Reform Bill, in order to provide ten pound holdings for the villagers, the only hint of its existence being faint traces of the foundations, and part of one of the walls, built into the structure of a farmhouse. Amongst the folk names of Bere Regis Torrefield is found, and the theory is certainly tenable that this patronymic is a debasement of the ancestral name; families of Huetts are also met with in the parish, and forcibly remind the Hardy student of Izz Huett, the dairymaid. The church was selected as a hiding-place for the Garlands by Miller Loveday, in the event of an invasion by Buonaparte, while it was also associated with the musical feats of Yeobright's father.

Beyond the interest imparted to the church by its connexion with *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, it is noted for a splendidly ornamental roof, the gift of Cardinal Moreton, who brought it from Flanders; this addition was made in the infancy of the sacred fabric, which bears unmistakable proofs of being of Saxon foundation. Apart from the keen attraction it offers to antiquarians, a live and human spirit is imparted to

it by a comparatively modern instance of penance which took place within its walls in the early part of the nineteenth century. For speaking evil of dignitaries, a young woman was condemned to shroud herself in a sheet, and appear before the congregation during Divine Service, an ordeal which must have been irksome to a young lady accustomed to worship God in her daintiest costume.

The opinions of a lady who lived in the sixteenth century are contained in a memorial tablet on a fine altar tomb. Margaret Skerne, once a Spanish princess, took the misfortune of her husband's decease as an opportunity for making the coming generations acquainted with her philosophy of life in the verse she wrote to commemorate that mournful occasion :

> " If each thing's end do each thing's worthe express,
> What is manne's life but vaine unperfectness ?
> How swiftly run we to our fatal end,
> Which have no hope, if Death be not our friend !
> I Skerne do show, that all our earthly trust,
> All earthly fayers and goods, and sweetes are dust.
> Looke on the worldes inside, and look on me,
> Here outside is but painted vanitie."

" Erected and finished by Margarete Skerne, his wife, which caused this work to be made, Ano Dni. 1596."

As the name Bere Regis implies, certain royal traditions are attached to the parish, and though

not of a very reputable nature, they bear testimony to an august past. Elfrida retired here after she had murdered Edward the Confessor, and it was on this occasion that she beat the young king with wax candles in default of a stick, because the lad wept for the death of his brother. "Wherefore," states one chronicler, "Ethelred ever hated wax candles, and would have none burnt before him all the days of his life." One who had fewer scruples than Elfrida, to wit, King John, visited Bere Regis on fifteen occasions. After the abandonment of the projected invasion of Normandy in 1205, he came to Bere, and in a fit of unusual piety ordered his bailiff "to cause a fair crucifix to be set up in our chapel at Bere." More consistent with his character, however, was the kitchen he had erected for his service two years later, and still more the exaction of the thirteenth on all movables, alike of clergy and laity, which was to be paid into "our chamber at Bere." In 1269 the manor passed to the Abbess of Tarent, and with it "a fair, a market, a free warren, and the whole forest of Bere," and at the Dissolution it was acquired by the Turbervilles, who derived much income from the fair on Woodbury Hill, held under the authority of a charter granted in the reign of Henry III.

A traditionary account of the origin of this fair tells of a pedlar who was overtaken by a sudden storm,

but as he went over the hill the rain ceased, and he spread out his cloth to dry in the sun. The country people living near were struck with the excellence of the cloth, and made such advantageous offers for it, that the whole stock was disposed of to the satisfaction of all parties. In the following year he returned with the same object in view, and subsequently other pedlars joined with goods of different descriptions until the fair grew into great importance as a market. It formerly lasted five days, from September 18th to September 23rd, and fine distinctions in the character of their rotation were observed, instanced by the following arrangement: (1) Wholesale day; (2) Gentlefolk's day; (3) All folks' day; (4) Sheep fair day; (5) Pack and penny day. In bygone years the county families used to seek pleasure among the entertainments of the Hill, and among these used to be reckoned the shaking of country lads into new pairs of leather breeches. Pictured by Mr. Thomas Hardy under the name of Greenhill in *Far from the Madding Crowd*, Woodbury Hill Fair has deteriorated sadly; though it is still a recognized market for sheep, the present day beholder will not see the fine show which delighted Gabriel Oak, while the pastimes which interested Bathsheba have changed their character, like all else in the land of Wessex.

Havenpool

A brief glimpse of Poole is given in the short story entitled "To please his wife" (*Life's Little Ironies*), where it figures under the slightly veiled name of Havenpool, the dominant tone of the town being reflected in the nautical career of Captain Jolliffe. In the Church of St. James, where he gave thanks for a safe return, there is a memorial tablet to one William Phippard, mariner, which probably suggested to Mr. Hardy the fitness of calling one of his characters by that surname, there being a Joanna Phippard in his story. On becoming Mrs. Jolliffe, we are told Joanna lived in a house near the quay, and during the absence of the captain and his sons, it is said "a shout or excitement of any kind at the corner of the Town Cellar, where the High Street joined the Quay, caused her to spring to her feet and cry, 'It is they.'"

The Town Cellar gives the predominant tone to the spacious quay, and is the gathering point of waterside characters whose hands can rarely be seen, as they are occupied in vain searchings for problematical coins. The Town Cellar is a large stone building, whose walls are strengthened by low buttresses, with details of a decidedly ecclesiastical character,

leading to the conjecture of a monastic origin, though subsequently it was appropriated by the lords of the manor for the tallages they received in kind. There was a tradition amongst the older inhabitants that the Town Cellar had been either a nunnery or a palace. This supposition, however, probably grew out of a pardonable desire to adorn a historic landmark with romance. Need there is none to weave fictional charms around it, as this husk of past activities has an accentuated being in the landscape because of its detachment from the prevalent spirit of the surroundings.

But the Town Cellar is of yesterday compared with the age of the haven. In point of antiquity it can be likened to Wareham, but there the similarity ends. Poole is more thriving than it was in ancient days, while the port once situated at the higher end of the waterway up which King Knut and a score of Danish pirates sailed, no longer exists. Once Poole was a Roman station on the Via Iceniana, and afterwards one of the chapelries of the Saxon kings, though there is no mention of it in Domesday Book, the omission being doubtless accounted for by its inclusion in the manor of Canford.

In the reign of Edward III the town fell into decay, and ceased to send any members to Parliament till the time of Henry VI. Hither came the Earl of

Richmond in 1483, with five hundred men and forty ships, but a storm dispersed his fleet and the vessels King Richard sent out to encounter it. At the outbreak of the wars with Spain, in "the spacious times of Queen Elizabeth," Spanish merchants left the port they had frequented so much, though the secession of this large body of trade did not permanently affect the prosperity of the haven.

During the whole period of the Civil Wars Poole was garrisoned for the Parliament. In 1643 Sydenham, the captain of the guard, lured the Earl of Crawford into a death trap by appearing to connive at the overthrow of the town, and promising to leave the gate open to the midnight ingress of the enemy. At the time appointed, the earl approached with his troops, and entered the gate with half the force in face of some heavy ordnance, which immediately opened fire. The earl escaped with difficulty, twenty prisoners were taken, and several Royalist soldiers killed. In the hostilities with France the mariners of Poole distinguished themselves; and the exploits of Captain Peter Jolliffe in this connexion are worthy of record, more especially as his namesake in Mr. Hardy's story was a sturdy sea dog. About the year 1694 this grim old sailor was cruising the Channel in his goodly ship, *The Sea Adventurer*, and perceiving a French privateer off Purbeck making a prize of a Weymouth fishing

boat, boldly went to the rescue, recaptured the defeated craft, and forced the privateer on shore near Lulworth, where the whole of the crew were made prisoners of war, the gallant captain of *The Sea Adventurer* receiving a gold medal and chain at the hands of his king.

Eighteenth century life in the quaint seaport was chiefly noticeable for smuggling exploits, the multiplicity of snug little creeks in the vicinity being an inducement to embark on these enterprises. On a certain occasion one John Diamond agreed with a number of smugglers to purchase a large quantity of tea at Guernsey, but on the homeward voyage the cutter loaded with the contraband merchandise was captured, and the tea forfeited and lodged in the Custom House. This misadventure incensed those who had speculated money on it to such an extent that a party of them armed themselves to the teeth, and, violently entering the Custom House, secured the tea before the eyes of the officials. Many of those who took part in this raid were members of the famous Hawkhurst gang mentioned in G. P. R. James' novel, *The Smuggler*.

The haven of to-day, though one borough, consists of two towns—one suggested by the trams, and the other by the Town Cellar, token of the unremembered yesterdays once chronicled as days of doom by those

who waited in vain for the return of mariners who passed down Farewell Street never to come again across the harbour bar. Ships no longer trade from this port to Newfoundland, but timber vessels from Norway and the Baltic, and yachts, are always found in the haven, spacious enough to contain an armada. Here and there the skeleton of a small ship is seen on the stocks of a building yard on the further side of the harbour, around which are scattered warehouses and cottages, behind all rising hills whitened with chalk patches. The quay is alive with the slow business of unhurrying seamen and labourers, and though some of the latter loll against sun-baked walls, even these are never still, for the restlessness of the sea in their blood keeps them stirring. Consonant with the prevalent spirit, youngsters are sometimes seen working at a disused pump opposite the Town Cellar, the clank of the handles asserting itself above the sound of dipping oars, the rattle of ropes, and the rhythmic cries of heaving sailors. A network of lanes runs in and out among the solid red-brick houses flanking the quay, so narrow in places that the outstretched arms of a man can reach from side to side. Waterside odours follow the wayfarer as his feet endeavour to unravel this tangle of footways. Houses there are which are perched above flights of rough steps, and houses with front doors secluded in grass-fringed courtyards,

whose existence is undreamt of till they are discovered by chance. Even the most respectable, though least interesting, quarter of the town is varied by a picturesque thatched cottage, old-fashioned alleys leading quaywards, and crooked thoroughfares that are twisted into eccentric curves. And it is this aspect which exemplifies the spirit of the town—new ideas are grafted on old stocks, and the sap of progress flows in channels worn by other customs, and thus the old mingles with the new, and is ultimately displaced by it.

Warborne

The gentle astronomer St. Cleeve is associated with Wimborne, for here it was he attended the ancient Grammar School, rustically described in *Two on a Tower* as "a place where they draw young gamesters' brains like rhubarb under a ninepenny pot." Thither Viviette proceeded when on her way to intercept the husband whom previously she had persuaded to leave her. These two fictitious characters figured upon an aged background.

Known to the Romans under the name of Vindogladia, Wimborne was a military station of

considerable importance, but, notwithstanding the antiquity of the town, its history has been marked by few of those moving incidents which give a sanguinary tinge to many of the other Wessex towns.

St. Cuthberga, sister of Ina, the reigning king of Wessex, founded a nunnery here in 700. "St. Cuthberga, having built her monastery, there macerated her body with almost continual watchings and fastings. She was humble both to God and man, and mild to all. Many virgins she also assembled in the same place; she permitted her body to enjoy no rest, but importunately day and night her prayers sounded in the ears of a merciful God."

On succeeding to Alfred's throne in 901, Edward the Elder was opposed by his cousin Ethelward, who possessed himself of Wimborne, and stayed there awhile in the hope of being reinforced. While at this town he abstracted one of the virgins from the nunnery, and made a pretence of marrying her in order to propitiate the outraged feelings of the community. Edward advanced against him, and pitched his camp in a place in the vicinity known as Badbury Rings. . . . Shrinking from the idea of a siege, Ethelward fled by night to the northern Danes, and there asked to be allowed to bear them company in waging war against his cousin.

During the reign of Ethelred the Unready the greater portion of the town was devastated by the Danes, and, apart from the steady growth of its magnificent church, no other facts of importance are chronicled about the ancient borough.

Guide books there are in plenty that contain histories of Wimborne Minster, and examinations of its architectural features, but facts of this kind often hinder the mind in realizing the beautiful potency of such an historic pile. Like everything else that human hands have fashioned to great ends, the minster bears in upon the inner consciousness the idea of infinite peace and imperishability. Some of the atmosphere of that eternity to which it points is distilled by the building, whose very stones, by long contact with human nature's best in all ages, are fraught with spiritual meanings. Amid the rise and fall of dynasties and the mutation of customs, theories and fashions, it has reared itself skyward like an embodied prayer, changing only into greater magnificence. It is fragrant with the excellencies of the Roman Catholic Faith, and is kindly dumb concerning its eras of declension.

The silence amongst the great arches is not merely the absence of sound; there are voices noiselessly embalmed in it. Dimly suggested though they be, the voices have suitable words for all sorts and conditions

of men, and though the communications are too subtle for some to translate, none who come here are sent empty away. The Minster is a touchstone to the character of those who are shadowed by it, and to watch its influence on the tourists who flock thither during the summer months, is to gain a deep conception of its potency. Earthy-natured men move uneasily, and conduct themselves like those in the presence of death, seeming even to apprehend the incongruity of their penny periodicals, while the pure in heart see their God.

The tension to which the Minster can strain impressionable natures is relaxed by the knowledge of the story attached to the tomb of Anthony Etricke, beneath the south-west window. This gentleman was the first Recorder of Poole, and the magistrate who committed the Duke of Monmouth after the battle of Sedgemoor, whose cause the people of Wimborne affected. Being offended by this attitude of theirs, Anthony Etricke swore that he would not be buried in their church or churchyard—under their ground or over it. To carry out this vow, he obtained permission to cut a niche in the wall, and there depositing his coffin, he fixed 1693 as the year of his death, and had that date inscribed on his tomb. But he did not depart this life till 1703, when his body was placed in an oak coffin, which, being enclosed in an outer

case of marble, was built into the wall in a situation coinciding with the details of his strange oath, the body being half under ground and half over, neither inside nor out, and running parallel with the inside wall of the church. The coffin bears the original date, 1693, in white characters, which are partly obliterated by the actual date of decease in golden letters. To prevent his last resting-place mouldering into decay, Anthony Etricke bequeathed the sum of 20*s.* to the church, in order that the niche and coffin might be kept in good repair. This money is paid out of the tithes of Parkstone, and is yearly administered in carrying out the behests of the eccentric dead.

The attachment of the vergers and clerks to the minster has the binding force of family ties, becoming stronger as their cheeks fade and blanch to the hue of the fabric they adore. These, however, are not the only ones who feel the mystic influence of the minster. Its chimes sound like the words of a friend in the ears of the rustics who are approaching their markets with dairy produce, and the ethereal notes are mingled with the accents of buyers and sellers. First, the minster called the town into being, and then hallowed it. Around, the houses of the burghers have changed their semblance again and again, according to whim, fashion, and necessity, it alone remaining permanent. The borough originated in a religious impulse, and

to-day it is permeated by the structure that still gives the town significance in the eyes of the world.

Knollsea and Corvsgate Castle

Swanage halts between the allurements of two eras, and cannot decide with any exact definiteness which she will espouse. Therefore, a hand is given to both, and thus are the charms of stone-tiled cottages reconciled with gay-bricked residences and hotels. Within the town of to-day are the remnants of the quaint place described as Knollsea in *The Hand of Ethelberta* in the following vignette:—"Knollsea was a seaside village lying snug within two headlands as between a finger and thumb. Everybody in the parish who was not a boatman was a quarrier, unless he were the gentleman who owned half the property, and had been a quarryman, or the other gentleman who owned the other half, and had been to sea."

Against such a primitive background glimmered part of the drama of Ethelberta's life. Thither the enterprising young widow retired to marry Lord Mountclere, with an avalanche of outraged relatives at their heels, chief among them being Sol and the bridegroom's brother, who in vain endeavoured to make Knollsea by steamer. Here the Chickerels took

up their abode, and it affords a last glimpse of Christopher Julian proposing to faithful little Picotee.

The history of Swanic, as it is termed in Domesday Book, is naturally connected with the Danes, who poured their hordes into this part of the country through the Dorset creeks. In 877 one hundred and twenty Danish vessels were wrecked on Peveril Point, and a similar catastrophe followed a sea fight between Alfred's fleet and the ships of the enemy, which were dashed to pieces on the same ledge of rocks. The town is referred to under the name of Sandwich by an antiquarian writer in the time of Henry VIII, who described the village of that day as "a fisher town."

According to a local tradition, a Spanish galleon, having been severed from the Armada, was wrecked in Swanage Bay. Some of the crew were saved from the wreck, made the town their permanent home, and intermarried with the folk. This account is offered as a generally accepted explanation of the Spanish colouring and type of feature seen in some of the women and children of the present day.

Rarely did the former inhabitants of Swanage emerge from their seclusion to take part in events which made history; they touched the world at few points, and seemed content to have their lives bound by the claims of fishing and quarrying.

The Purbeck quarries have been worked from time

immemorial. The tombs of the Turbervilles in Bere Regis Church, and the columns of Salisbury Cathedral, are made of this stone, it having been largely used for ecclesiastical purposes during the Middle Ages. On Shrove Tuesday the quarriers, who belong to a very ancient and exclusive guild, assemble for their annual meeting at Corfe Castle, where the records are kept, the officers being a warden and a steward. Stringent regulations govern this association, one of which deals with the question of "outsiders." None but the sons of quarriers are admitted to the privileges of the order, or can engage in the trade. When demands exceed powers of supply, the problem cannot be solved by the importation of additional workmen, because thereby the whole body of Purbeck quarriers would be up in arms against the infringement of their ancestral rights. Among the quaint customs attached to this trade is one which obliges apprentices who take up their freedom at the Shrove Tuesday court to appear with a penny loaf in one hand and a pot of beer in the other, and upon the payment of 6*s.* 8*d.* they are declared free, and allowed to take apprentices after the lapse of seven years. The sum of one shilling converts a quarrier's wife into a freewoman, with the privilege of carrying on the business at her husband's death. Another annual custom is the kicking of a football from Langton through Corfe Castle to the superseded quay

at Owre, and many persons in no way connected with the stone trade join in the sport. It is usual for the last married quarrier who is a foreman to provide the ball, which is afterwards presented to the lord of the manor, together with a pound of pepper.

About twenty years ago the spirit of change stalked up the long and winding street that composed Swanage, and broadened the lane where the opposing roofs almost touched. It crept into bulging, many-paned windows, and made some of the inhabitants tentative tradesmen, and converted cottages, stone-roofed and hatched over the doorway, into pretentious business premises. At last the world had discovered this retreat; not, however, the world in search of noisy distraction, but those who sought a place where jaded minds could rest in tranquillity. On the heels of artists and authors came visitors by steamer, and afterwards by rail, and the inhabitants began adding to modest incomes by lodging these quiet strangers, who did not turn their little world upside down. The demand for accommodation increased, and a few boarding establishments and hotels were built. Though such modern structures intrude memories of boisterous holiday resorts upon the vision, they have not been the means of dissipating the peace of the town by attracting to it noisy pleasure-seekers. In this connection an unusually frank statement from a guide book must be

quoted :—" Swanage cannot be said to be well provided with amusements in the usual acceptation of the word. You find no regular band, no theatre, very few entertainments, and the pier is more used as a means of getting on board the various steamers than as a promenade."

Wholly subjective is the life of those haunting the town in spring and summer, for they belong to the enviable class of those who create their own amusements. When trippers accustomed to Margate happen to find themselves in Swanage, they wander disconsolately in search of switchback railways and the like, and chance upon an institute with a semi-ecclesiastical interior, where papers and magazines await perusal. . . . The remarks of people who have neither time nor inclination to learn the art of self-entertainment sound insistently at times in the ears of the municipal body ; happily, the members of it listen to the plea of that minority who here find an Elysium of quietude, so they mentally waft the clamorous majority to places more congenial to their tastes.

Termed Corvsgate Castle by Mr. Hardy, the remnants of the once mighty castle of Corfe adorn a hill about five miles distant from Swanage. Ethelberta viewed it on the occasion of a meeting of the Wessex Archæological Society, to which Lord Mountclere invited her, in order that his acquaintance with the

charming young widow might have an opportunity of ripening.

Its history has been touched upon in an earlier part of this study, but some incidents in connexion with the ancient pile must be recorded, because they create a bond of feeling which links the castle with the present day. . . . The remoteness of Corfe from the centres of political and military activity constituted it a safe State prison, it having been selected by Henry I as the stronghold for the detention of his elder brother, Robert Curthose, Duke of Normandy, before his removal to Cardiff. When Henry I died Stephen asserted his right to the throne, but Corfe declared for the Empress Matilda, for whom it was held till the accession of her son, Henry II. Then a sinister shadow fell over the castle, reflected from the atrocious life of the English Nero, John, who caused his nephew Arthur to be assassinated after the battle of Mirabeau, and incarcerated Eleanor in the Purbeck fortress. Two other princesses were her companions at this period—Margery and Isabel, daughters of William of Scotland, who had forfeited their liberty on account of some fancied breach of the feudal law. In the case of Eleanor, the dull hours were brightened by occasional rides beyond the castle walls, a leniency not extended to her royal companions, who must have pined the more when the favoured princess returned with the smell of

meadowlands in her robes. It formed a grim lodging for a group of noble dames—the unsafe castle of a tyrant, where they were surrounded by an atmosphere of menace, the only escape possible being on the pinions of sight. At times tedium would have driven them to the chamber window, and one day the clatter of hoofs and the ring of steel would have announced the approach of twenty-four captives—war-stained knights from Mirabeau, who were being taken to the doom of starvation in the lonely prison of Purbeck. The dry facts of the antiquarian shed some light on the life of these ill-starred princesses, there being an inventory of the "tunics and super-tunics, capes of cambric, and fur of miniver" worn by them, while from the same source it is learnt that their three waiting maids were given "robes of bright green" wherewith to make themselves pleasant withal in the eyes of the soldiery, and thus glean sparse news of the great world's doings.

Having passed into the hands of Sir John Bankes, Corfe Castle played a prominent part on behalf of the king in 1643. During the temporary absence of this illustrious gentleman the fortress was besieged by the Parliamentarians, and but for the intrepidity of Lady Bankes it would at once have succumbed to the attack. An attempt to enter by strategy having been discovered and frustrated, the gates clanged to

their shutting, and a six weeks' siege commenced. The garrison only consisted of a few soldiers, and servants of either sex; the maids distinguished themselves by firing the first cannon shot and foiling the besiegers in an attempt to scale the rampart. The indomitable lady animated all with her own high spirit, and, after repeated efforts to breach the embattled walls, the assailants were forced to retire. Subsequently, however, the castle was taken through the disloyalty of the Governor, the news of its overthrow being joyously received by Parliament, who gave immediate orders for its demolition.

Sherton Abbas

The road from Dorchester to Sherborne traverses a district lovely in itself, and most interesting to students of the Wessex novels. Cerne Abbas, known under the name of Abbot's Cernel in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* occupies the mid-distance, it being a village still loitering in a mediæval atmosphere, the fine old church being opposed by ancient top-heavy houses built of wood and plaster, while a lordly manor house is within hail of it. Onward the road stretches away into the leafy arcady surrounding the hamlet termed Little Hintock by Mr. Hardy, the background

of *The Woodlanders*, to which novel Sherborne is linked by several ties. Winterborne met Grace Melbury here after she had been subjected to the mental process known as "polishing." At its principal hotel the girl stayed with her husband, Fitzpiers, and into its grand abbey church she passed in the worthier company of Winterborne. Mr. Melbury's men went thither in a body to search for the girl on a certain memorable occasion, and a last glimpse of the town is given when she stayed in it with her reconciled husband.

Sherborne is first mentioned in history as the place where St. Ealdhelm established the seat of the Bishopric of Western Wessex in the year 705, it then being the second city of the kingdom, next in importance to Winchester. For a brief while it attained and held the dignified position of capital of Wessex, partly on account of its remoteness and inaccessibility to the marauders from the sea. In this district Englishmen held their own throughout against the Northmen. The dust of Ealhstan, who won the first complete victory over the Danes, rests in Sherborne, which is also the burial place of Æthelbald and Æthelbert. Its ecclesiastical importance was diminished in 909 to the jurisdiction of Dorset, a contraction of power and influence which presaged decline. In 998 Ethelred the Unready granted leave to Bishop Wulfsy III

to introduce into Sherborne Monastery the rule of St. Benedict, and severe reforms were adopted, under the impression that the Second Advent was at hand. From the record of the abbey in Domesday Book, the bishop appears as the temporal lord of the town, and nine neighbouring manors were set apart for the maintenance of monks, whose abbot he was, they having no freehold of their own. Roger of Caen, the chief minister of Henry I, separated the office of abbot of Sherborne from that of bishop of the diocese, and to him William of Malmesbury ascribed the introduction of that later form of Norman architecture, the fine-jointed masonry, splendid fragments of which are to be seen in the abbey church.

The growth of this magnificent edifice coincided with the expansion of religious sentiments, and from the time of its foundation by St. Ealdhelm each age expressed its faith in stone. During the fifteenth century the abbey church was restored, an undertaking which is entwined with stories of the strained relationships which existed between the monks and the townspeople. As the town grew around the sacred fabric, the monks had allowed the townsfolk to use the lower part of the nave as a parish church, and thus it came about that the abbey became a divided church, part parochial and part conventual. This arrangement did not appear to satisfy either

party, and a church known as Alhalowes was erected at the west end of the parent edifice for the use of the parishioners, an alteration which bore the fruit of future trouble. This new building had not the status of a parish church, because it was still necessary for all Sherborne children to be baptized in the font situated in the nave of the abbey. Parishioners considered this necessity a grievance, and eight of them defied the rectorial privileges and rites by causing a font to be established in Alhalowes. Reciprocal passion grew apace, and the monks on their part complained that the parish bell rang to matins at an unseasonable hour, and disturbed the "forty winks" they were in the habit of enjoying before the accustomed hour for rising.

This quarrel came to a head in 1436; the bishop was appealed to, and a judicial solution of the issues pronounced, but the episcopal decisions did not terminate the dispute, which came to a violent end. According to Leland, "The monks induced one Walter Gallor, a stoute Bocher dwelling yn Sherborne to enter Alhalowes, where he defacid clene the Fontstone. The townsmen, aided by an Erle of Huntindune lying in those Quarters, rose in playne sedition. . . . A Preste . . . shot a shaft with fier into the Toppe of that parte of St. Marye Church that divided the Est Part that the Monkes

usid from (that) the Townes-men usid; and this Partition chauncing at that Tyme to be thakked yn the Rofe, was sette a fier, and consequently al the hole Church, the Lede and Belles meltid, was defacid." Abbot Bradford at once set himself to repair the damage done by the fire, and instituting prosecutions against the townsfolk, made them contribute towards the cost incurred. The work of restoration and improvement was proceeded with by the succeeding abbots with rare feeling for the artistic possibilities of architecture, and with that enthusiasm for beauty which characterized most of the mediæval ecclesiastics.

The bishop and abbot kept such a tight hold on the governing reins of Sherborne that it never attained to self-government, but in 1539 came a notice to quit which could not be disregarded. For nearly nine centuries the monastery and school of Sherborne had been doing their work more or less successfully; all these many activities were quenched by Henry VIII, into whose hands the abbot and sixteen monks surrendered themselves, together with the abbey and all that belonged to it. Most of the extensive church property was demised by the king to one of his courtiers, but in 1540 the parishioners bought the abbey for one hundred marks.

After a period of eleven years' suspended animation Edward VI refounded the school, it being the only

portion of the monastery that has survived to the present day. The "Orders for Sherborne Schole confirmed 11 June, 1592," paint a contemporary picture of the system of studies in post-Reformation schools, and among the rules there is a quaint clause declaring that none shall be received as scholars except such as "shalbe ready at the least to enter into the gramer, That is to saie, such as can reade latyn and English, and somethinge write." There were other statutes confirmed in 1679, but they do not invite quotation as their interest is limited.

Mr. Thomas Hardy draws a picture of Sherborne Castle in *A Group of Noble Dames.* Its fortunes have been various; both it and the manor at one time belonged to Sir Walter Raleigh, and both were finally acquired by the Digby family. It sustained a siege and was destroyed during the Civil Wars by the Parliamentarians under Fairfax, during which period occasional skirmishes between the belligerents took place in the streets of Sherborne.

Strangers feel translated to a far-gone time when they are encompassed by the dismembered skeleton of a past era, which peeps at them in Sherborne streets, in fragments of time-tinged arch, house walls bulged by the weight of time, and an abbey whose foundations were laid in a pagan age. In the midst of the town there is a canopied conduit which was removed from

the dissolved monastery, and three fairs which have the roots of their being in the Middle Ages are an annual convention. This town is individualized by the atmosphere only found in ancient seats of learning, such as Cambridge and Oxford. There appears to be a subtle correspondence between the semblance of the school and the traditional studies it enshrines, telling of the struggle, not for gain, but knowledge. Though the corrosive fingers of time have been busy with the walls, long association with boyhood has laden them with youth's aroma. It is faintly suggested by the chime of the bells; the notes well out with studious precision, and linger until the sounds are mellowed into richer sweetness, and dwindle as reluctantly into silence as the myriad schoolboys have halted to lessons within earshot of its voice. Even the everyday life of the town appears to be shaped to academic issues; voices are hushed as in the presence of scholars at their studies, the impression being deepened by the sight of gowned masters. Chiming in with these traditions are memories of the great actor, William Charles Macready, who spent many years in Sherborne after his retirement from the stage, when he interested himself in night school work and the foundation of a Literary and Scientific Institute, and gave his last Shakespearian reading in a room in Long Street, where the

night school was carried on. Modern builders have been merciful to Sherborne, where those who desire to breathe the air of a true old English town can steep themselves in an atmosphere charmingly free from the reek of an utilitarian age.

Shaston

In *Jude the Obscure* Mr. Hardy gives Shaftesbury its vernacular name, Shaston, and makes it part of the background for the inter-play of character between Sue Bridehead, Jude Fawley, and Richard Phillotson. The town is associated also with *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, for here it was Tess took the carrier's van for her home at Marlott, known on the prosaic map as Marnhull, a journey of about half a dozen miles.

So old is Shaftesbury, so traditionary the accounts of its earliest days, that authentic facts about its origin cannot be given. Once it bore the name of Palladour, a name that removes it to the dream regions where gleam the fabulous towers of Camelot, and the lands of promise about which poets sing.

The real history of Shaftesbury commences with its restoration in 880, when an abbey was founded by Alfred the Great, which was consecrated in 888. The town was then in the diocese of Sherborne, a

see occupied by the learned Asser, the instructor of Alfred's riper years. His daughter Ælgiva was appointed the first abbess, and many well-born nuns were with her in the convent, which finally became her last resting-place. In this conventual retreat Edward the Elder confined his niece Elfivina in 922, because of wilful love wilfully bestowed on one of her uncle's enemies. The remains of Edward the Martyr were conveyed to the abbey, and pious pilgrims from all parts resorted to the sacred relic, till the religious establishment grew into such wealth and honour as to give rise to the saying recorded by Fuller: "If the abbess of Shaftesbury might wed the abbot of Glastonbury, their heir would have more lands than the King of England." King Knut's death at Shaftesbury in 1035 is presumptive proof of the town's importance in pre-Norman days, and so zealously religious were the people, that the existence of twelve churches are recorded.

An instance of thirteenth century discipline is found in an old account of the borough: "John Peckham Archbishop of Canterbury, on his visitation to the diocese of Sarum, 1285, excommunicated Sir Osbert Gifford, Knt., for stealing two nuns out of his monastery at Wilton, and absolved him on the following severe condition—that he should never after come into a nunnery, or into the company of nuns, that

he should for three Sundays together be whipped in the parish church of Wilton, and as many times in the market and parish of Shaftesbury, and fast a certain number of months, and not wear a shirt for three years, and not take upon him the habit or title of knight, or wear any apparel but material of russet colour with lamb or sheepskin, and he should restore the nuns to their convents to undergo the same."

Occasionally Shaftesbury was the scene of minor conflicts during the Civil Wars. In 1644, six hundred mercenaries who were hired to aid the rebellion greatly oppressed the country in and around the town, when they quartered themselves on the peaceful inhabitants, and fined some of them to the extent of one thousand pounds each.

Water, at this period, was obtained from wells about a quarter of a mile below the town, in the parish of Motcombe. By agreement, dated 1662, between the lord of the manor and the mayor and burgesses of Shaftesbury, the mayor was to carry to the wells a Byzant, or besom, decked like a May garland, together with a calf's head, a gallon of ale and two penny loaves, to the lord of the manor. All these curious properties were then restored to the chief magistrate, and brought back to the town with pomp and circumstance, a practice which was discontinued in 1830.

Like a cluster of nests in the fork of a tree, the houses

now composing Shaftesbury are thrust heavenward above the vale of Blackmoor by the hill upon which it is built, from whence views of far hamlets are seen. To gain this eyrie is a pedestrian feat only undertaken by would-be mountaineers. Cows from the grazing land on either side idle into the middle of the road and there ruminate, till the shriek of a passing train sends them careering pasture-wards. These bovine meditations are rarely disturbed by those who tramp the highway, because the expenditure of energy such interference demands would be too exhausting. After the journey has been accomplished the weary go in search of rest, some to the usual resorts, and others to a church, renowned for the services that are never held in it. Six hundred pounds were spent in the repair of the tower in 1886, but whimsically apprehensive, the inhabitants look upon it askance, and no service has been celebrated in it since the year of its renovation. This unconventional treatment of a sacred edifice harmonizes with the following descriptive passage from *Jude the Obscure*: "It is also said that after the Middle Ages the inhabitants were too poor to pay their priests, and hence were compelled to pull down their churches, and refrain altogether from the public worship of God—a necessity which they bemoaned over their cups in the settles of their inns on Sunday afternoons."

Only a fragment now remains of Shaftesbury's magnificent abbey, and most of the twelve churches which surrounded it have disappeared ; the Dissolution sapped these ecclesiastical foundations, and time and neglect caused them to crumble. A few old houses still exist, such as Grove's Place in Bimport Street, from whence Sue Bridehead is supposed to have eloped with Jude Fawley.

Local wits affirm that the inhabitants have forgotten the way to die, and one who was questioned concerning the town's mortality searched his memory for the last funeral, and said it occurred two years ago. Vivifying is the air on the summit, and the presence of the weakly who journey far to breathe it, is the dominant characteristic of summer life in this hill town. Staid and decorous are the streets, where business only seems to be an interlude in the tradesman's day. Only a glimpse of the monster, competition, has been seen, and early Victorian habits have not yet been quickened into high-pressured momentum. When heart and brain have been refreshed by the loitering pace of the town, the fitting hour has arrived wherein to appreciate William Barnes' song of Shaftesbury. Accompanying all farewells to Palladour should be these fragments of the Dorset poet's song :—

Shaftesbury Feäir

"When hill borne Paladore did show,
So bright to me down miles below.
As woonce the zun, a-rollèn west,
Did brighten up his hill's high breast.
Wi' walls a-lookèn dazzlèn white,
Or yollow, on the grey-topp'd height
Of Paladore, as peäle day wore
Away so feäire.
Oh, how I wish'd that I wer there.

The pleäce wer too vur off to spy
The livèn vo'k a-passèn by;
The vo'k too vur vor aïr to bring
The words that they did speak or zing.
All dum' to me wer each abode,
An' empty wer the down-hill road
Vrom Paladore, as peäle day wore
Away so feäire.
But how I wish'd that I wer there.

* * *

While Paladore on watch, do straïn
Her eyes to Blackmwore's blue-hill'd pläin,
While Duncliffe is the traveller's mark,
Or cloty Stour a-rollèn dark;
Or while our bells do call, vor greäce,
The vo'k avore their Seäviour's feäce,
Mid Paladore, an' Pol a dear,
Vor ever know
O' peace and plenty down below."

Port Bredy

Fictitiously styled Port Bredy, the town of Bridport gives local colour to the short story entitled *Fellow Townsmen* in the *Wessex Tales*. It was a notable place in the days of Edward the Confessor, when it contained a mint, one hundred and twenty houses, and a priory of monks. Henry III owned Bridport as a royal demesne, and leased it to the inhabitants for a small quit rent. The same king gave the town a charter, but it was not incorporated till the reign of Henry VIII.

From an early period Bridport has been noted for its hempen manufactures, and from the hemp once largely grown in the locality arose the saying "to be stabbed by a Bridport dagger," evidently a facetious synonym for hanging. Nearly the whole of the cordage and canvas of the English fleet that engaged and shattered the Armada of Spain were made at this place, which also provided a certain number of ships and men to man them. The port from whence they sailed has diminished in importance since John Hudderesfield obtained from Richard II a grant of a halfpenny toll on every horseload of goods imported or exported, on behalf of harbour improvements.

Twice did the plague devastate the quiet old town, and in 1625 the Quarter Sessions at Dorchester made

an order for the collection of forty pounds a week "towards the relief and sustenance of the sick and distressed people," and in 1670, at the Bridport Sessions, an order was made allowing twelve pounds out of the county stock "for the poor of Bridport out of the lazary of Allington."

Stormed in the Civil Wars by the Royalists, it was visited by Charles II when a fugitive, after an abortive attempt to embark for France at Charmouth, and the house, once a hostelry, at which he stayed, is still in existence in the main street. A Sabbath morning calm, in June, 1685, rattled with the war-notes of Monmouth's soldiers, who surprised the outposts, men of the Dorset militia. They fell back upon the main body of the king's forces, and ere the duke's party had been driven out of the town many had been killed on either side.

Of the malignity of the sea, the fisher folk have had repeated proof. Again and again the haven has been rendered useless by the tides barring it up with sand. An Act was passed in 1722 for restoring the haven and piers; its preamble states that, by reason of a great and general sickness which killed the greater part of the most wealthy inhabitants, and other accidents, the harbour was neglected, the piers fell to ruin, and the town decayed; consequently, there was no security for ships driven by stress of weather into

the deep and dangerous bay of the west. During the month of November, 1824, a terrible gale swept the coast, floated some timber into adjacent fields, and lifted two vessels high and dry upon the quay, where they were stranded when the tide receded. Every winter the clangour of the mighty waves resounds on the beach, when the roar of the down-washed pebbles is flung by the wind into the country beyond.

Prosperous, but not pretentious, is the town of Bridport. There are several suppositions as to how it gained its large amount of corporate property, and one conjecture remotely associates this most English town with some Huguenot fugitives, who, dying, left their property to the borough that had befriended them. Too proud to appear other than it is, the town is like an elderly burgess, wedded to habits contracted when in trade, and loth to forsake the dwelling with its old-fashioned shop-front for a modern villa with "the latest improvements." Money has not spelt the destruction of old landmarks, nor created zealous enthusiasm to conceal a homespun origin. Rather has it kept in being a desire to preserve the primitive elements of its birthplace—the haven that is being throttled by the sea. Instead of the glare of red brick, softly hued thatches tone with the colour of the cliffs and the beach, which shelters modest cottages. No sound of shipwrights' hammers disturbs the air as in

the days of old ; the waters sleep, the haven sleeps, until winter's rude awakening. This calm is not the repose of indolence, but the well-earned rest of a busy life's end. Though galvanized with spasmodic energy when the fishers dash seaward to "shoot" the mackerel net, this impression of youthful activity is dissipated by the appearance of the sea-dogs who haul the nets.

Far different is the spirit animating the other part of the town at a two-mile removal from the shore, where fingers either of iron or of flesh have been plying the staple manufacture for centuries. This ancestral industry imparts liveliness to the beat of the corporate pulse, which but for it would stagnantly heave. Every week carriers' vans stand end-ways on the broad main street, which, viewed from a central point, appears to be a connecting link between two hills. Clothed in a cool environing mantle of meadowland, Bridport is indissolubly mated to the country in a confederacy of mutual help. Though the town is gracious to summer visitors, no clamorous invitations are offered to them, the authorities apparently counting it unwise to solicit attention by obliterating their individuality.

Here and there the gossip of an old inhabitant sets the imagination aflame. Such is the story told by one who remembered two affectionate sisters,

who went singly to church in Sedan chairs, conveyed thither by two men learned in this mode of conveyance, who wore knee breeches. When the elder sister arrived, she waited in the porch while the poles were removed by the family henchmen, who retired to insert them in the chair which brought the other lady. At their death, one of the chairs became the property of a shiftless shop-keeper, whose nightly slumbers were taken in it for many years.

This story was told to the present writer by an old inhabitant who had many other interesting reminiscences to impart of the days that were. Of course, time has wrought many changes here as elsewhere, yet notwithstanding the mutations of commerce and custom, this thriving little town has maintained its distinctive individuality unimpaired through the welter of five centuries.



"The door was studded, and the keystone of the arch was a mask. Originally the mask had exhibited a comic leer . . . but generations of Casterbridge boys had thrown stones at the mask, aiming at its open mouth; and the blows thereof had chipped off the lips and jaws . . ."—*The Mayor of Casterbridge*, p. 168.

Photo by Flisher, Weymouth

SYNOPSIS OF THE WESSEX NOVELS

ALIKE to those who know the Wessex novels from first to last, and those whose acquaintanceship extends only to certain of them, these brief summaries are offered, with a view to handy reference and an invitation to the re-perusal of the stories themselves. Perhaps, also, the glimpse here afforded of a tale hitherto unread will induce some to remedy the omission, an end which it is hoped this portion of the study will bring about. This synopsis, however, is intended to serve a further purpose. It is designed to supplement and illuminate the section dealing with the Wessex towns, and their connexion with the novels, an end only to be realized by some attempt to give coherent summaries of the plots.

Desperate Remedies

(1871).

Scenes: Budmouth Regis, Knapwater Horse, Carriford, Lulstead Cove, Tolchurch.

CHARACTERS.

Owen Graye.	Rev. Raunham.
Cytherea Graye.	Mr. Gradfield.
Edward Springrove.	Anne Seaway.
Miss Aldclyffe.	Mrs. Morris.
Aeneas Manston.	Mrs. Leat.
Mrs. Manston.	Richard Crickett.
Adelaide Hinton.	Mrs. Crickett.
Farmer Springrove.	Mr. Nyttleton.

Rustics, servants, etc.

The death of Mr. Graye, the elder, leaves his two children, Owen and Cytherea, alone in the world, and practically destitute. A friend of his father's, Mr. Gradfield, an architect of Budmouth Regis, offers Owen a position in his office, and thither he proceeds, accompanied by his sister, who wishes to obtain employment as governess or companion. From time to time she hears her brother refer to Edward Springrove, an architect in the same office with him. Springrove becomes an object of interest to Cytherea, and this kindly feeling is fostered by an accidental encounter on board a steamer at Lulstead Cove. The friendship

between them speedily ripens into love; eventually he proposes to her, with reservations about his life which disturb the girl, who nevertheless accepts him as her affianced lover. After some trouble, Cytherea obtains the post of lady's maid to Miss Aldclyffe, of Knapwater House, by whom she is warmly befriended, because, in reality, Cytherea is the daughter of an old lover. In several ways Miss Aldclyffe strikes at the girl's attachment to Springrove, whose father lives in Carriford village, and informs the girl of his engagement to Adelaide Hinton. Meanwhile, Manston takes up his residence on the estate as land steward, and becomes enamoured of Cytherea. Manston, who is Miss Aldclyffe's illegitimate child, commences his suit under her patronage, and is helped in it by the assistance he renders Owen, who is thrown out of employment by an accident to his foot. Miss Aldclyffe is informed by letter that Manston is married, and he is forced to make arrangements for his wife residing with him. On the night of her arrival Mrs. Manston does not find her husband at home, and seeks a lodging at the *Three Tranters*, and is apparently burnt to death in the fire that occurs there the same night. After this ostensible tragedy, pressure is brought to bear on Cytherea to marry Manston. The match is encouraged by Owen, and hastened by Miss Aldclyffe, who tries to force Springrove to fulfil his promise to marry Adelaide

Hinton. In a spirit of heroic self-abnegation, Cytherea marries Manston, and they proceed to Southampton. Suspicions are immediately set on foot that the land steward's former wife is still alive. The Rev. Raunham, Owen and Springrove consult, and the two latter start for Southampton, where Springrove communicates this suspicion to Cytherea, with the result that she returns home with her brother. Manston seems to use every expedient to discover the whereabouts of his wife, and is at last apparently successful. Owen doubts the woman's identity, and casually meeting her, notices that her eyes are not of the same colour as those of the former Mrs. Manston. This is told to Mr. Raunham, further light being thrown on the mystery by Springrove's revelation of the woman's name, Anne Seaway. The police are put on Manston's track, and after a desperate flight he gives himself in charge, writes a confession of the murder of his wife on the night she was supposed to have been burnt to death in the fire at *The Three Tranters*, and commits suicide. The crime and its consequences undermine Miss Aldclyffe's health, and on her deathbed, she divulges to Cytherea her relationship to Manston, and explains why her affections had primarily twined themselves around the girl. Upon Miss Aldclyffe's decease, Springrove, who has been set at liberty by Adelaide's marriage, weds Cytherea, and is installed

by Mr. Raunham as steward of Knapwater House, with the reversion of the property on the owner's death, and ere the narrative closes Owen's prospects are brightened by a lucrative appointment in London.

Under the Greenwood Tree

(1872).

Scenes: Upper and Lower Mellstock, Yalbury Wood, and neighbourhood.

CHARACTERS.

Tranter Dewy.	Farmer Shiner.
Mrs. Dewy.	Rev. Maybold.
Dick Dewy.	Michael Mail.
Susan Dewy.	Robert Penny.
Charlie Dewy.	Mrs. Penny.
Jim Dewy.	Elias Spinks.
Bessie Dewy.	Thomas Leaf.
Reuben Dewy.	Joseph Bowman.
Fancy Day.	Granfer William.
Geoffrey Day.	Granfer James.
Mrs. Day.	Voss.

Rustics, etc.

The quaint rustics of this story are first seen on a starry Christmas Eve, on their way to Tranter Dewy's house, where they are refreshed with "a real drop o' the right sort." During the ensuing conversation, Fancy, the school-mistress, is mentioned as one to be cheered with a carol, a suggestion heartily approved by

Dick Dewy. The singing boys arrive, and, according to custom, the choir proceed on their errand of goodwill to men, an expression of kindliness not appreciated by Shiner. A brief vision of Fancy at the window, fires Dick with love, and Christmas Day has a new joy because of her presence in the church, an instinctive perception of the girl's charm being also perceived by the young vicar, Mr. Maybold. The "gallery," led by the tranter, are moved to jealousy by the singing of Fancy and the school-girls under her charge, and this gives rise to much humorous complaint. Dick's gladness grows apace as the hour of the party nears, for the leader of the youthful culprits has promised to attend it, but the presence of Shiner takes the edge off the evening's enjoyment, because of the farmer's evident liking for Fancy, though the young fellow secures her for the most delightful country dance. On her departure the fair one leaves a handkerchief behind, but the wooer makes a sorry use of the excuse provided by it for cultivating the girl's society, and the advance of Spring does not find him very forward in his suit. The members of the Mellstock parish choir are troubled by Mr. Maybold's decision to dispense with their musical services in favour of a harmonium, to be played, it is thought, by Fancy Day. Dick alleges Fancy's disinclination to appear in this capacity, and, after some discussion, the choir determine to lay the

matter before the vicar. Mr. Maybold reasserts his intention of disbanding the choir, grants them a respite, and confirms the suspicion that Shiner proposed Fancy for the new office. Dick visits the Day household to fetch the girl back to her duties, after a short visit home. Mr. Day does not care for the idea of Dick as a suitor, preferring the farmer, and the journey back to the school-house is clouded by the thought of sundry allusions made by Mr. Day. This rather spoils the meal eaten in common by the two young people on their return, his dissatisfaction being increased by the immediate visit of the vicar, who calls as Dick takes his leave. Journeying to Budmouth Regis with some bee-hives, the disconsolate lover unexpectedly meets Fancy, who accepts his offer to drive her back when his business is concluded, and ere home is reached Dick receives a pleasant answer to a certain question. Their engagement is not known to Mr. Day, who urges his daughter to encourage Shiner. Dick fails to obtain the parental consent, and, after consulting a witch, Fancy frightens her father by apparently pining away, and as it is intimated her restoration to health depends on his approval of the match, he withdraws his opposition. Full of the weariness of isolation, and allured by worldly prospects, Fancy is subsequently tempted to accept Mr. Maybold's offer of marriage; he hears of

Dick's prior claim, renounces the girl, and observes strict secrecy about her vagary. Then Dick's patience is rewarded, and he realizes the desire of his heart in wedding sweet Fancy Day.

A Pair of Blue Eyes

(1873)

Scenes: Endelstow, Castle Boterel, St. Launce's.

CHARACTERS.

Elfride Swancourt.	Mary and Kate.
Reverend Swancourt.	Mrs. Jethway.
Stephen Smith.	William Worm.
Henry Knight.	John Smith.
Mrs. Troyton.	Jane Smith.
Lord Luxellian.	Martin Cannister.
Lady Luxellian.	Unity.

Labourers, servants, etc.

The Swancourt household, consisting of father and daughter, is disturbed by the advent of a young architect, Stephen Smith, who is sent to Endelstow to superintend the restoration of the church. He is lodged at the vicarage, and the vicar being subject to severe attacks of gout, he is thrown much into Elfride's company, there being no other society in the neighbourhood, save at Endelstow House, Lord Luxellian's residence. Elfride and Stephen gravitate

towards one another, and by the time he is recalled to London a warm intimacy exists between them. In the fulfilment of an invitation, he revisits the vicarage, and with candour prompted by affection, dwells at length on what he owes to his friend, Henry Knight, reviewer and essayist. Before long he also tells the girl of his love, which is reciprocated. Stephen's sense of honour prompts him to explain the humble position his father holds on the Luxellian estate, a revelation which subtly affects Elfride's emotions. In her turn, the girl speaks of a former wooer, then dead, the son of a Widow Jethway, whom she treated rather ill, and is hated by the widow because of it. Stephen's presence at a conversation between the vicar and Martin Cannister accounts for his hearing of a slight accident to his father, whom he then acknowledges. The fact that John Smith is engaged on the neighbouring estate, brings Mr. Swancourt to forbid Elfride to associate with Stephen; she resents his attitude, and confesses her love. In order to circumvent this opposition, they arrange to be married in London, whither they proceed. Elfride's heart fails her, and she returns home unwed, having been seen at the station by Mrs. Jethway. Immediately, the girl hears of her father's stealthy marriage with the rich Mrs. Troyton, who is the means of introducing Henry Knight into the family circle, Stephen having

meanwhile obtained an appointment in India. Knight visits Endelstow, and Elfride is disturbed by the impact of his personality, which slowly displaces the image of her absent lover, about whom she does not speak; hence ensuing complications, which are brought about by her lack of honesty. On the day Stephen is passing down the Channel on his homeward way, Elfride rescues Knight from a perilous position on a cliff, and another link is forged in the chain which binds them together. Stephen comes to the village in the hope of wedding Elfride, who makes an appointment by writing, which she does not keep. Miserable significance is attached to this indifference, when Stephen accidentally sees Knight and Elfride together as lovers in a summer-house. Ere long the three meet by chance in the Luxellian vault, which is opened for the reception of Lady Luxellian's corpse, but Elfride does not recognize her old lover as such. Soon after this encounter Knight makes a definite avowal, and takes the place of his one-time friend and pupil. In due course sundry hints and inferences arouse disquieting thoughts, and, cross-questioning Elfride, Knight learns of her previous attachment, light on the girl's nature being thrown by a letter from Mrs. Jethway. Tortured by the realization of Elfride's conduct, he breaks off the engagement, travels, and subsequently meets Stephen in London. Half ex-

planations between them follow, and, though not arranged, they both travel in the same carriage to St. Launce's, and, unknown to them, Elfride's corpse is carried by the train. Arriving at their destination, they hear of the girl's death, and prior marriage to Lord Luxellian, this being the solution and comfort which are found for their rivalship and wounded hearts.

Far from the Madding Crowd

(1874).

Scenes: Weatherbury, Casterbridge, Shotsford.

CHARACTERS.

Bathsheba Everdene.	Joseph Poorgrass.
Gabriel Oak.	Matthew Moon.
Farmer Boldwood.	Mark Clarke.
Sergeant Troy.	Jan Coggan.
Fanny Robin.	Baily Pennyways.
Mrs. Hurst.	Liddy Smallbury.
Jacob Smallbury.	Maryann Money.
Jack Smallbury.	Mrs. Coggan.
Billy Smallbury.	Henry Fray.

Laban Tall.

Gabriel's infatuation for Bathsheba springs into being when she rescues him from suffocation in a shepherd's hut, and the chain is forged which holds him to the end. A disaster which overtakes his flock ruins him, and he is obliged to seek employment from

others. In the prosecution of this search he arrives at Bathsheba's farm at a critical moment; a rick is on fire, and as he is instrumental in saving the other ricks, he is engaged as shepherd, an appointment viewed by the rustics with satisfaction. Bathsheba's mind is temporarily diverted from Gabriel by the disappearance of Fanny Robin; but the girl, although seen by Oak, was not recognized by him. His duties soon develop beyond shepherding, through the bailiff's dismissal, and Bathsheba alternately resents and accepts his good offices, though she refuses to think of him now in the light of a possible suitor. In a mischievous mood she sends Boldwood a valentine, and this slight attention transforms the farmer's attitude to the world, and makes him pleasantly conscious of womanhood, at least, for a time. Meanwhile Troy, who has seduced Fanny Robin, brings himself to the verge of marrying his victim; but as she does not arrive at the church at the appointed hour, the ceremony does not take place. Much brooding over the valentine and the discovery of the sender's identity moves Boldwood to woo Bathsheba, but his suit is rejected, and off and on Gabriel is treated with more individual favour. A frank expression of opinion concerning her treatment of Boldwood brings about his dismissal, but she is forced to reinstate him. At the shearing supper Boldwood, who has continued to make his

advances, thinks he is gaining in Bathsheba's regard, and comes to a conditional understanding with her. Going the rounds of the farm the same night she encounters Troy, his spur becoming entangled in her skirt. His debonnaire and impudent manner favourably impress her, and meeting from time to time, the emotion assumes a positive tone, and the fascination of Bathsheba is completed when Troy bewilders her by his prowess with the sword. Notwithstanding the warnings of Gabriel and Boldwood concerning the Sergeant, she keeps an appointment with him at Bath, and returns to the farm as his wife, the events leading up to this consummation being embroidered with rustic comment and gossip. To the two men who sincerely love Bathsheba, the step she has taken assumes tragic import. While Bathsheba's experience as a married woman is still new, Troy presides at the harvest supper, and under his influence and example the work-folk get drunk, notwithstanding threatening weather, and the unprotected condition of eight ricks. The signs of the impending storm are read by Gabriel, who begins to thatch and cover the ricks single-handed, till Bathsheba steals out to help him, and the property is saved. Troy's irresponsibility troubles the farm hands, and his wife most of all. One evening when returning from market they meet Fanny Robin, who falls down on seeing her betrayer.

She continues her painful way, dies in Casterbridge Union, and is brought back to Weatherbury for interment. Bathsheba discovers her husband's former relationship to the deceased, and Troy, whose affections have cooled, leaves the farm, and his reputed death by drowning is soon reported. Acting on this supposition Boldwood renews his suit, and thinking it to be an act of restitution, Bathsheba promises to marry him. Troy suddenly reappears at the Christmas party given at Boldwood's residence, and the maddened farmer shoots him, and suffers penal servitude for the crime, Gabriel marrying Bathsheba ere the story closes.

N.B.—It is said that Mr. Hardy's aunt, with whom he stayed when a boy, formed the prototype for the character of Bathsheba Everdene.

The Hand of Ethelberta

(1876).

Scenes: Anglebury, Sandbourne, London, Knollsea, Enckworth Melchester, Corvsgate Castle.

CHARACTERS.

Ethelberta Petherwin (*née* Chickerel).	Emmeline Chickerel.
Christopher Julian.	Joey Chickerel.
Lady Petherwin.	Faith Julian.
Chickerel, the butler.	Mrs. Belmaine.
Mrs. Chickerel.	Lord Mountclere.
Picotee Chickerel.	Neigh.
Dan Chickerel.	Gwendoline Chickerel.
Sol Chickerel.	Ladywell.
Cornelia Chickerel.	Doncastle.
Myrtle Chickerel.	Mrs. Doncastle.
Georgina Chickerel.	Honble. Mountclere.
	Mrs. Menlove.

Servants, rustics, etc.

Ethelberta is a daring girl, for whom fate provides an anomalous position. She is the daughter of a butler, and is allied to the nobility in the person of her mother-in-law, Lady Petherwin. Quite at haphazard she meets an old lover, Christopher Julian, and being a widow she is inclined to look upon him regardfully, while her sister Picotee also treasures a tender sentiment for the young musician, who lives at Sandbourne with his sister, Faith. The old bonds begin to tighten

again, when Julian receives a letter from Ethelberta, thanking him for the musical setting he has written for one of her poems, the publication of which has created some stir. Lady Petherwin is much incensed on finding Ethelberta to be the author of them, so much so, that she alters her will, and dying soon afterwards, leaves the girl only the lease of a town house. Julian removes to London, and learns his idol's parentage and her intention of adopting the public narration of stories as a means of livelihood. The girl's enterprise creates a furore in London, where she settles. The Chickerel family are persuaded to leave the country, the brothers find work in the Metropolis, and the sisters are entrusted with the domestic management of the town house on the understanding that, in the eyes of the world, they must treat their brilliant sister as mistress. Julian frequently visits Ethelberta, who is soon flattered and petted by a smart London set, among whom Ladywell and Neigh are admirers, but Julian's courtship makes no striking advance. After a while Ethelberta detects the love Picotee bears Julian, and encourages it for several reasons. She is troubled about her speculative mode of existence, because she recognizes the luxury of wedding a poor man cannot be hers, on account of the quandary to the Chickerel family which would result from it. Prompted by such considerations she thinks

of Neigh, the well-to-do bachelor, in the light of a useful husband, having previously discouraged Ladywell. The difficulty of keeping her lowly origin a secret is increased by the familiarity between Joey and Menlove, maid to Mrs. Doncastle, and fellow servant to Chickerel, her father, and it is through this channel the revelation of her lowly origin is ultimately made known. Previous to taking the family whose destinies she governs to Knollsea, Julian's new home, Ethelberta attends a dinner at the Doncastles, where she makes the acquaintance of an elderly nobleman, Lord Mountclere, who is at once fascinated. His country seat is situated near Knollsea, and hearing of Ethelberta's intention to spend a holiday at that town, he invites her to an archæological meeting, which is to take place at Corvsgate Castle during the time of her visit, and this meeting she attends. Mountclere's infatuation grows, though its quality is affected by the discovery of Ethelberta's parentage. She, fancying the knowledge of the facts of her life are about to be revealed, goes to Rouen, Mountclere following, also Neigh and Ladywell, all of whom are temporized with, and told a definite answer will be given them in a month's time. The nobleman's offer of marriage is accepted by Ethelberta; Lord Mountclere invites her to accompany him to a concert at Melchester, where she is brought face to face with Julian, and scenting the

nobleman's unworthy device, she breaks off the engagement. A reconciliation is effected, and the wedding takes place before the bridegroom's brother and the bride's family can prevent it, and, shorn of his old affection, Julian plights his troth to Picotee.

The Return of the Native

(1878).

Scenes: Egdon Heath and Anglebury.

CHARACTERS.

Mrs. Yeobright.	Susan Nonsuch.
Thomassin Yeobright.	Johnnie Nonsuch.
Clym Yeobright.	Olly Dowden.
Eustacia Vye.	Grandfer Cantle.
Damon Wildeve.	Christian Cantle.
Diggory Venn.	Timothy Fairway.
Captain Vye.	Heathmen, labourers, etc.

A hitch in the matrimonial proceedings of Thomassin and Wildeve, proprietor of *The Quiet Woman*, sends the shuttle of complications spinning. They went to Anglebury to be wed, but as the certificate was drawn up for a contract in another town the ceremony was postponed, and the would-be bride returns to Mrs. Yeobright in the wagon of an old admirer—Diggory Venn, the reddleman. Another is interested in this miscarriage, Eustacia, of Egdon Heath, who

lights a bonfire as a signal to entice Wildeve to the allegiance he was wont to pay her. He answers the summons, and is upbraided for his desertion. The conversation is partly overheard by Venn, who constitutes himself Thomassin's guardian angel, and makes it his duty to urge Eustacia to lift the cloud from the Yeobright home by influencing Wildeve to play an honourable part. Clym's return from Paris, and his appearance in the locality, impinges upon Eustacia's imagination and deflects her emotions from Wildeve, whom she practically forces to fulfil his promise to Thomassin. On his part, Clym responds to her charm to the usual extent, and much against his mother's wish he marries Eustacia. She is full of dreams of Parisian life, but Clym resolves not to take up his trade again in the gay capital of France. While preparing himself for another career his eyesight begins to fail, and in order to maintain himself he becomes a furze cutter, the girl's golden dreams being reduced to the purview of a cottage. Seeking freedom from depression she attends a village fair; Wildeve is there also, and they dance together, and meet Venn on their homeward way. Ever alert to watch Wildeve's movements, he observes him wander in the direction of Clym's cottage, and intimidates him for a time. Desiring to remove the estrangement which exists, Mrs. Yeobright sets out

across the heath, to call on her son at an hour in the afternoon when he is fast asleep, but noticing his tools outside the door, knocks. Eustacia and Wildeve are conversing within, and on that account Eustacia does not answer the door. Then Mrs. Yeobright retraces her steps till exhaustion overcomes her, and a boy finds her in a distracted condition on the heath. In her frenzy she speaks of being driven away by her own son, and frightened by her words, the boy passes on his way. Clym finds his mother almost unconscious, carries her to a shed, summons ready helpers, and dispatches some one for a doctor, as Mrs. Yeobright was stung by an adder while on the heath. Eustacia's feelings undergo a further revulsion from the channel prescribed by duty, when she hears of Wildeve's inheritance of a modest fortune. Walking with him in this mood they pass the hut and see Clym bending over his mother, and when they part company Mrs. Yeobright is dead. From various sources Clym hears of how his mother came to be alone on the heath, and upbraids Eustacia for her conduct, she returning to her father. Time brings a desire for reconciliation on his part, and he writes his wife a propitiatory note on the night she determines to elope with Wildeve. Frightened by her husband's absence, Thomassin visits Clym on the eventful night. He searches for his errant wife in company with Venn. Wildeve is

met with a trap near Shadwater Weir; the sound of a heavy splash in the water draws them instantly to the weir, where Eustacia's body is seen floating, and Wildeve plunges in, but cannot save her, and both are drowned. Eventually Thomassin weds Diggory Venn, and Clym becomes an itinerant preacher.

The Trumpet Major

(1880).

Scenes: Overcombe, Budmouth Regis.

CHARACTERS.

Martha Garland.	Corporal Tullidge.
Anne Garland.	Anthony Cripplestraw.
Miller Loveday.	Simon Burden.
John Loveday.	William Tremlett.
Bob Loveday.	James Comfort.
Matilda Johnson.	Jim Cornick.
Benjamin Derriman.	Granny Seamore.
Festus Derriman.	Captain Hardy.

Soldiers, yeomen, rustics, etc.

At the time when Buonaparte scares England with the threat of an invasion, the inhabitants of Overcombe are somewhat reassured by a large company of soldiery camping on the downs, these being an object of interest to Miller Loveday and his lodgers, Mrs. Garland and her daughter Anne. John Love-

day, the trumpet major, is among the troops, and soon visits his father and falls in love with Anne, who is not very pleasantly distracted in her dreams of him by the attentions of young Derriman, whom she meets on her visits to the elder Derriman's house. The girl's heart inclines to John, who at length obtains Mrs. Garland's consent to conduct them to the camp, the miller joining the party. Derriman accosts them, and Mrs. Garland, who favours him as her daughter's suitor, is rather displeased because Anne refuses his offer to take her for a walk; but an event occurs ere home is reached, which makes the good woman look upon the trumpet major's aspirations with a friendly eye—the miller's proposal of marriage. One night King George is to pass along the turnpike road, whither the Lovedays and Garlands go to see him. John confesses his love and Anne rejects him, he accepting the position with passive resignation. The miller hears that a letter is awaiting him at Budmouth Regis post office, and John fetches it, the household being excited because of the news it contains. Bob, the sailor son, informs the miller he is coming home to be married. In due course he returns, and is followed shortly by the temporary girl of his heart, Matilda Johnson, an actress. She is recognized by the trumpet major, who knows something to her discredit, and compels her to leave and

renounce his brother. Accepting the inevitable, Bob finds consolation in the company of his old playmate, Anne, who, together with himself, is offended at John's interference, but for a different reason. The miller marries Mrs. Garland, and the dragoon moves with his regiment to another station. Bob's spirits rise under the influence of his growing regard for Anne, though her attitude does not altogether please him. Since entering the Loveday family, the new Mrs. Loveday thinks less favourably of her daughter doing the same thing, and though she has little opportunity of encouraging Derriman, she does what she can to smooth his way. Bob asks his father to inform Mrs. Loveday of the true reason of John's objection to Miss Johnson as a sister-in-law, in order that she may communicate it to Anne. This is done, and the girl sends an explanatory letter to the trumpet major, whom she thought to be interested in the actress. The countryside is roused into action by a rumour of Buonaparte's landing, and Mrs. Loveday and Anne attempt to drive away from the dangerous locality, leaving Bob and the miller to join the volunteers. The Lovedays' gig breaks down, and Anne is left while her mother searches for some one to repair it. Anne rests in a cottage, and is frightened by the appearance of Derriman, who adopts a ruse to get her out of doors. Immediately she eludes him by

flinging herself on to his horse, which gallops away, and is stopped in its career by John Loveday. Recognizing Bob's evident love for Anne, he dissembles his own, and gives them to believe his heart is anchored elsewhere. Through collusion with Matilda Johnson, Derriman puts the press-gang on the track of Bob, who successfully defies them, but longing for the sea again, he enters the navy, and in parting from the trumpet major, whose secret is known to him, he resigns any claim he may have upon the affections of Anne, to whom the soldier is still devoted. Bob does not write to the girl, who suffers from his silence. News comes of the battle off Cape Trafalgar, though no line from Bob to her. Consequently she gravitates towards John, and endeavours to love him. But the appearance of the sailor as a lieutenant and the irresponsible love he brings with him, cannot be withstood, and they marry, while the trumpet major "marches into the night."

A Laodicean

(1881).

Scenes: Stancy, Castle Marktown, various Continental towns.

CHARACTERS.

Paula Power.	William Dare.
Charlotte de Stancy.	Mrs. Goodman.
Sir William de Stancy.	Rev. Woodwell.
Captain de Stancy.	Abner Power.
George Somerset.	Havill.
Mr. Somerset, R.A.	Servants, rustics, etc.

Pursuing his architectural studies, George Somerset happens upon Stancy Castle, and is given permission to view it by Charlotte, companion to the owner, Paula, whom he accidentally meets in the grounds, in conversation with the Rev. Woodwell, who is rebuking her for lukewarmness in the Baptist faith, and, by accepting a theological challenge made by the minister, he becomes acquainted with Paula. Hearing of his architectural pursuits, she allows him every facility to examine the castle, and their sympathies flow out to one another. A discussion between him and Havill, another architect, is the means of Somerset being deputed to prepare plans for extensive alterations to the aged building, and the arrangements this project

necessitate bring Paula and Somerset in closer touch. As, however, the work of renovating the castle has been half promised to Havill, he suggests this architect should be allowed to compete for the work. Dare, formerly in the employ of Somerset, tempts Havill to scrutinize his rival's work, and gains him access to it, with the result that the committee to whom the plans are submitted tie the two competitors. Captain de Stancy comes with his regiment to Marktown, and Dare, who is his illegitimate son, inflames him with a desire to marry Paula, who soon feels the glamour of his ancestry, which appeals to her. Charlotte is the means of introducing her brother to the castle, where he harps upon the antiquarian string, and appeals to Paula's sense of the romantically picturesque. The appearance of Abner Power, the girl's uncle, further aids the captain in his suit, by opposing Somerset's evident desire. The Powers and Charlotte leave for Nice, and for a time Paula and Stephen maintain an uninterrupted correspondence. Hearing that De Stancy has joined the party, and made apprehensive by the girl's silence, he starts to join her. At Monte Carlo he meets Dare, who, in order to further the captain's suit, dispatches a telegram to Paula in Somerset's name, asking for the loan of one hundred pounds, to be sent to him at a certain address. De Stancy is deputed to hand him the money, but returns

without seeing him, and, owing to this incident and other causes, Paula's affections seem altogether diverted from their old channel, and Somerset resigns his architectural work at the castle. De Stancy's importunities prevail upon Paula, who reluctantly consents to marry him. Ere the wedding takes place, certain facts which come into Charlotte's possession enable her to remove the imputations against Somerset's honour—an action prompted by self-sacrificing love—and on the captain confessing to the paternity of Dare, Paula withdraws from the compact. So deeply does she mourn the deceptions that brought about the estrangement with Somerset, that, hearing he is in Normandy, she decides to express her sorrow to him in person. Accompanied by Mrs. Goodman, she crosses the Channel, and prosecutes a search for the maligned one, and comes across Mr. Somerset the elder at Caen. Finding George, she asks him to continue the work at the castle, but postpones trenching on more delicate matters. A slight illness keeps him within doors, and, driven by anxiety, Paula visits him; her presence and words are restorative, and Somerset is finally enthroned in the heart of *A Laodicean*.

Two on a Tower

(1882).

Scenes: Welland House, Charborough, Welland.

CHARACTERS.

Viviette, Lady Constantine.	Bishop of Melchester.
Sir Blount Constantine.	Rev. Torkingham.
Louis.	Tabitha Larke.
Swithin St. Cleeve.	Amos Fry.
Gammer Martin.	Hezekiah Biles.
Mrs. Green.	Nat Chapman.
Mrs. Martin.	Sammy Blore.

Servants, etc.

One day the tower in the grounds of Welland House arouses the curiosity of Viviette, wife of the absent Sir Blount Constantine, and, visiting it, she is surprised to find it occupied by Swithin St. Cleeve, a young astronomer, who has fitted up a rude observatory on the top. As the tower belongs to the estate, the discovery of his tenancy of it is in the nature of a slight *contretemps*, but permission is given him to use it in the pursuit of his studies. She promises on some future occasion to increase her knowledge of the heavens under his tuition, and they frequently met in the improvised observatory, Viviette's thoughts being less in the sky than the astronomer's. Prompted

to confidence by his winning personality, she entrusts him with a delicate commission concerning her husband, which he creditably fulfils. In showing her a new object lens he has bought, it falls and is broken to pieces, and Swithin is much upset at the loss. Viviette buys another to replace it, and visiting the tower one afternoon, leaves it there, the astronomer being asleep at the time. This kindness is followed by the gift of an equatorial telescope, and Swithin's joy is unbounded, though the donor of it continues to be as impersonally regarded as a star. The neglected lady is fascinated by him, and the tower becomes the kernel of her dreams. Overworking himself, Swithin is forced to take to his bed, his illness being increased by exposure. Viviette grows apprehensive, and, defying discretion and convention, she goes to Swithin and brings him back to life with a kiss, the strenuous desire to behold a new comet also helping towards his recovery. Against this love Viviette unsuccessfully struggles, but she is honourably enabled to indulge it by hearing of Sir Blount's death in Africa, a fact Swithin learns from Torkingham, and he, in his turn, awakes to affection, although Lady Constantine is nine years his senior. "Journeys end in lovers meeting," as they generally do, and at length Swithin proposes to marry Viviette privately. Her brother Louis writes pressing her to form a good alliance, as the

worldly prospects of the family are poor, but she pays little heed to the advice; the arrangements are made, and Viviette is united to Swithin at Bath, their life resuming its old channel in general outward aspect. The arrival of Louis introduces a discordant element, and only on the evenings when he is away from the house can the young husband safely visit his wife. In accordance with her brother's wishes, she entertains the Bishop, who is charmed to the extent of paying her marked attentions. Swithin is confirmed by his lordship, who takes an interest in the young astronomer, and pays him a visit in the observatory. While there the Bishop notices an indication of a lady's presence, and subsequently takes the young fellow to task for what appears to be an evidence of moral culpability, and Swithin cannot clear himself of the imputation because of his promise of secrecy in regard to his marriage. Louis is angry with Viviette for so coolly meeting the advances of the Bishop, and is still further annoyed by her refusal to wed his lordship. The family lawyer informs Viviette on indubitable evidence that Sir Blount died much later than the date supposed, and she woefully recognizes that Swithin is not her husband in the eyes of the law. This news does not perturb Swithin, although the nullity of the marriage puts him in a position to benefit under his uncle's arbitrary will, the con-

ditions of which are that he can only inherit the fortune if he remains single till his twenty-fifth birthday. This fact coming to Viviette's knowledge, she seeks no re-marriage, and gives him the opportunity of travelling and devoting himself to astronomical research, and accordingly he sets out on a winter expedition to view the Transit of Venus at a remote southern station. Sentimental negotiations are opened up again by the Bishop, and the match being furthered by Louis' diplomacy, and smoothed by Swithin's unaccountable silence, the marriage takes place, but his lordship does not live long to enjoy his wife's society. At last Swithin returns, and goes immediately to the one he loves with an offer of marriage, but Viviette dies of amazed joy, leaving one child as an emblem of the past.

The Mayor of Casterbridge

(1886).

Scenes: Weydon Priors, Casterbridge.

CHARACTERS.

Michael Henchard.	Christopher Coney.
Susan Henchard.	Solomon Longways.
Elizabeth Jane Newson.	Abel Whittle.
Richard Newson.	Nance Mockridge.
Donald Farfrae.	Mrs. Cuxsom.
Lucetta Templeman.	Mrs. Stannidge.
Jopp.	Benjamin Grower.

Townsmen, constables, etc.

Michael Henchard and his wife and daughter, Susan and Elizabeth-Jane, are first observed on their way to Weydon Priors, where, under alcoholic influence, he sells Susan to the sailor Newson. Remorse follows on the skirts of this action, and Henchard swears an oath to abstain from intoxicating liquors for twenty years. Believing Newson to be drowned, Susan and Elizabeth-Jane set out for Casterbridge, where Henchard is residing, and discover him to be no other than the mayor of the town. Farfrae, a Scotchman, introduces himself to Henchard at a critical time, and because of his business acumen he is engaged as manager of the corn dealings. After some deliberation, Susan sends Elizabeth-Jane to

Henchard, who thus hears of his wife's existence, but is disappointed to learn the girl is known by the name of Newson. The sundered pair are reunited, and the girl blooms into beauty in an atmosphere of material comfort, and is admired by Farfrae, whose popularity and enterprise begin to stir Henchard's jealousy; this passion smoulders and breaks into a flame of animosity, when the Scotchman outdoes him in organizing a celebration of some event of national importance, and he is dismissed, and forbidden to associate with Elizabeth-Jane. Farfrae then enters into trade on his own account, and fortune favours him at every turn, much to Henchard's displeasure. Ere Susan's decease she gives Henchard a letter which is not to be opened till her daughter's wedding day, though he reads it, and is thereby informed that the girl is Newson's child, and not his own, and henceforth Elizabeth-Jane is treated, sometimes with cool disregard, and sometimes with open hostility. Lucetta Templeman, a lady well known to the Mayor of Casterbridge, settles in the town, and engages the hardly used girl as companion. Henchard attempts to renew his intimate relations with the newcomer, and to seal them with the stamp of marriage, but she palters, and finally falls in love with Farfrae, whose business develops more and more, and Elizabeth-Jane suffers in seeing one who was her lover paying atten-

tions to another woman. The trade rivalry between Henchard and Farfrae grows in intensity, the Mayor of Casterbridge plunging into reckless speculations, though he at last prevails upon Lucetta to agree to his matrimonial proposal. A catastrophic revelation is made at the police court where Henchard is adjudicating. An old woman who was present at the wife sale at Weydon Priors is arraigned before the local bench, upon which Henchard is sitting, and charges him with that criminal vagary, and his reputation is ruined, and his intention of wedding Lucetta frustrated, she being united to Farfrae. Financial failure overtakes Henchard, and he is forced to take employment at the hands of the victorious Scotchman, who shows him the nicest consideration; the ruined man's vow is accomplished, and despair invites him to return to the abuse of the stimulants he had not touched for twenty years. Some of Lucetta's old letters are still in his possession; some of these he reads to her husband, without revealing the name of the writer, and then, in answer to Lucetta's earnest petition to destroy them, Henchard promises to send them to her house. An untrustworthy messenger is chosen, the letters are tampered with, and the facts of their former relationship become known in disreputable quarters, with the result that a skimmity ride is organized by the roughs to carica-

ture their one-time affection. This brutal exhibition is seen by Lucetta, and the sight of it induces an illness, which ends her life. Elizabeth-Jane has previously returned to Henchard to brighten and soothe the wrecked man, who tenderly responds to her womanly solicitude. Even this enjoyment is not his for long ; Newson appears and claims his daughter, and Henchard brokenly takes his way out of the town in search of work. Hearing of Elizabeth-Jane's coming union with Farfrae, however, Henchard returns for the wedding, but his manner and appearance cause him to be overlooked in the merry-making, and the much-afflicted man wanders forth an exile to die in the country.

The Woodlanders

(1887).

Scenes: Little Hintock; Sherton Abbas.

CHARACTERS.

George Melbury.	Timothy Tangs.
Mrs. Melbury.	Robert Creedle.
Grace Melbury.	Grammer Oliver.
Giles Winterborne.	John Upjohn.
Edred Fitzpiers.	Barber Percomb.
Felice Charmond.	Mrs. Dollery.
Marty South.	Fred Beaucock.
John South.	Farmer Cawtree.
Suke Damson.	Rustics, etc.

For reasons which are set forth, Melbury had determined to marry his daughter Grace to a neighbour, Giles Winterborne, who is beloved of the work girl, Marty South. Winterborne is deputed to meet Grace on her return home, and drives to Sherton Abbas to fetch her, but the sophistication in her tone and manner somewhat distresses him. The first night she is at home Grace sees the light in the cottage where Fitzpiers resides, glimmering in the darkness, and her curiosity in the occupant is aroused. Noticing his daughter's educational polish, Melbury's matrimonial intention with regard to her undergoes a change; ambition enters and Winterborne is treated

with unaccustomed coldness. His apprehensions are increased when he hears that in response to an invitation Grace purposes visiting the fashionable widow, Felice Charmond, then resident in the district, and the hale young fellow is troubled by the idea of the girl gliding out of the old homely station. South's death is the means of dispossessing Winterborne of his lifehold property, ruining his prospects, and erecting another barrier between him and the object of his affections, while Fitzpiers steps into the vacant place in the girl's heart. The doctor's suit is encouraged by Melbury, and the quaint observance of Midsummer Eve, and an encounter in the wood in connexion with it, deepen the current of his feeling, and Fitzpiers asks permission to pay his addresses to the girl. As a result of them Fitzpiers marries Grace, and the newly-wed couple settle in Melbury's house. Malign accident brings Fitzpiers in contact with Felice Charmond, an idol of former days, now worldly and unprincipled, and his visits to her become frequent and protracted. His professional plans are altered because the realization of them would interfere with the illicit friendship. The constant absences of her husband arouse Grace's suspicions, especially as his excuses are sometimes vague and lame, though the suspected ones continue to meet by adroit contrivances. Indifferent treatment at the hands of Fitzpiers causes

Grace to experience a revulsion of feeling in favour of Winterborne, on whose staunchness and honesty of character she knows she can rely. In his sorrow Melbury also inclines to Winterborne, of whom he makes a confidant, and he refers to his intention of appealing to Mrs. Charmond's sense of honour, with equivocable result when the suggestion is carried out. Grace and Felice meet; the latter whispers a secret in the ears of the young wife, and the rupture with Fitzpiers is consequently widened. A slight satisfaction is granted to Melbury, who seizes an opportunity to castigate Fitzpiers, by throwing him from the back of a horse; he is not greatly injured by the fall, and manages to make his way to Felice, and then leaves the neighbourhood, having first sent a farewell letter to his wife. Stung into action by some sense of guilt, Melbury endeavours to discover a means whereby his daughter can become a free woman again, and fails, after raising false hopes in Grace and Winterborne. Deeply penitent, Fitzpiers comes back from the Continent, Felice having been murdered by a jealous lover. The intimation of his return is the cause of Grace suddenly deciding to visit an old school friend. On her journey she loses her way in some plantations, and stumbles across Winterborne's cottage late in the evening. Ill as he is, Giles chivalrously resigns his mean abode to her use, and

dies of the effect of the night's exposure in the open air. Remorse drives Fitzpiers to repeatedly sue for forgiveness, and at last, notwithstanding his associations with Felice and Suke Damson, a reconciliation is brought about, and Marty South is last seen at the grave of Giles Winterborne.

Tess of the D'Urbervilles

(1891).

Scenes : Marlott, Blakemore Vale, Talbothays Dairy, Kingsbere, Sandbourne.

CHARACTERS.

Tess Durbeyfield.	Cuthbert Clare.
Angel Clare.	Felix Clare.
Alec D'Urberville.	Parson Tringham.
Mrs. D'Urberville.	Mercy Chant.
John Durbeyfield.	Dairyman Crick.
Mrs. Durbeyfield.	Marian.
Abraham Durbeyfield.	Retty Priddle.
Liza-Lu Durbeyfield.	Izz Huett.
Rev. Clare.	Car Darche.
Mrs. Clare.	Children, labourers, etc.

A chance remark concerning the nobility of their ancestry results in charging the Durbeyfield family with a dangerous sentiment. The glorious dreams which come on the wake of this discovery are dis-

counted by Tess, though, to please her parents, she consents to approach the rich Mrs. D'Urberville, in the guise of a poor relation. Once inside the garden of the mansion the girl is observed by Alec D'Urberville, who engages the girl in some minor capacity on the estate, and commences his advances. Journeying back from a fair in company with some other girls, Tess is frightened by their vulgarity, and still more by the attitude of Car Darche, and Alec, who is riding by at the time, persuades the innocent girl to escape her tormentors by riding away with him on his horse. This she does; Alec mistakes the way and leaves the tired girl while he reconnoitres; on his return the poor child is sleeping, and awakes to find she is a "maiden no more." Forced to return home by this disaster, she is upbraided for it by her parents, who soon take latitudinarian views of the girl's misfortune. Doing the work that falls to her hand, Tess is dashed about on rocks not of her own making, and the death of her babe almost takes her to the acme of human suffering. Determined to regain the intangible bloom of which she has been deprived, Tess becomes a dairymaid under Mr. Crick, and for a time life unfolds in more peaceful significance, with Angel Clare, the gentle dairyman, as the central figure in her private drama. Tess and Angel gravitate together, though she is not alone in her admiration

of him, because Retty Priddle, Izz Huett and Marian also worship the young fellow. Borne on the stream of love's development comes the corpse of her bitter past, and Tess recognizes its malignancy, and resolves to be utterly candid when Clare speaks of his love, but an attempt to communicate the secret by letter proves abortive. The marriage day is fixed, and the ceremony takes place, the confession being perforce postponed till the first night of their residence at Wellbridge, once a manor house in the possession of the knightly D'Urbervilles. Palliating little, slurring nothing, brave Tess unflinchingly tells of her blighted maidenhood; and the fine essence of Clare's love is dissipated, though once he intentionally lapsed in the same way. The concussion of fears brought about by the alienation which follows tears the girl's soul; Clare departs for Brazil, and she goes home heartbroken. Here she does not stay long, and when the money left by her husband is exhausted, Tess maintains herself by the work of her hands. In her penury and desolation Alec appears before Tess, first as a religious devotee, and next as passion's slave, bound by fatal ties to the woman he has ruined. In vain Tess sends letters of appeal to her husband: no answer comes from him, and Alec's temptations grows more insistent and insidious, aided as they are by kindness to the poverty-stricken Durbeyfields,

Angel's inexplicable silence, and her own hard lot. At last, despairing and reckless, Tess yields to Alec's solicitations; this happens on the eve of Angel's arrival in England, and he arrives home, bringing with him remorse for the past, and a determination to atone for it by future devotion. A clue is given him as to the whereabouts of Tess, who is at Sandbourne with Alec D'Urberville. The result of Angel's unexpected visit drives Tess to murder Alec, and this done, she flies from justice in company with Angel Clare, who is informed of the crime. Not many days are they allowed to enjoy one another's society. Tess is arrested and hung, and at the flying of the sinister flag over Wintoncester Gaol, the curtain falls upon Clare and Liza-Lu as they rise from their knees in prayer.

Jude the Obscure

(1895).

Scenes: Marygreen, Christminster, Shaston, Aldbrickham, Melchester.

CHARACTERS.

Jude Fawley.	Tinker Taylor.
Drusilla Fawley.	Uncle Jim.
Sue Bridehead.	Uncle Joe.
Arabella Donn.	Anny.
Mrs. Williams.	Sarah.
Richard Phillotson.	Mrs. Edlen.
George Gillingham.	Cartlett.
Mr. Donn.	Little Father Time.
Farmer Troutham.	Mr. Highbridge.
Physician Vilbert.	

Undergraduates, mechanics, labourers, etc.

Menial employment, obscure birth, and an earnest desire for a scholarly life, are united in the person of young Jude Fawley, whose longing for a university career is intensified by the departure of his schoolmaster, Phillotson, for the seat of learning at Christminster. Jude makes strenuous efforts towards self-culture, and gains some knowledge of languages and the classics, despite his straitened circumstances. As a preliminary step towards the goal he has in view, the young fellow learns something of freestone work,

so that he may be able to keep himself by a trade while pursuing a course of studies at the university city. But Jude gets into the toils of Arabella Donn, who prevails upon him to marry her, by a despicable strategy, and a speedy separation is the result. The longing for Christminster re-asserts itself, and thither Jude goes in the endeavour to fulfil a young man's hopes of life, with youth's under-estimate of handicapping conditions. During the day employment is obtained in a stonemason's yard, and most of the nights are spent in hard reading. The presence of his cousin, Sue Bridehead, in the city, introduces a sweet and disturbing factor into his life, and presages coming entanglements. Together with the girl he renews the acquaintance of his former schoolmaster, Phillotson, the upshot of this incident being Sue's engagement in the school under his charge. The companionship of kindred work inspires the schoolmaster with love for his assistant, who allows herself to be worshipped, the knowledge of their intimacy depressing the super-sensitive Jude. In order to approximate more nearly to abstract ambition, he writes seeking light from one of the college dons, and is advised to remain in his own sphere and trade, counsel which greatly exasperates poor Jude, who flies to the forgetfulness found in liquor. Out of the penitential mood which follows grows the aspiration

of taking holy orders, and he goes to Melchester, where Sue is undergoing training at the Normal College. She informs him of her promise to marry Phillotson when the certificate is gained, though the cousins associate on terms of greater intimacy. An unavoidable absence with Jude is the cause of Sue running away from the training college. After certain reports reach the ears of the principals re-admission to the institution is refused, and the sense of being misjudged binds the cousins closer together. Phillotson's love is unrewarded by any heart-satisfying return, though he shows the utmost patience during the engagement, which in due time culminates in marriage, and soon after this event Jude is confronted with his wife Arabella, in the guise of a barmaid, but the ill-assorted couple come to no arrangements about the future. Sue, the victim of a curious constitution, finds married life with Phillotson distasteful, and with the permission of her husband she leaves him and lives with her cousin, who is thus turned from his ecclesiastical ambition. The relationship is somewhat marred in his estimation by the potency of the same element in Sue's nature, which bitterly tinctured her attitude to Phillotson, but, nevertheless, the strange connexion between them is maintained for some time, with conflictions of feeling and motive arising from their respective positions

and characters. Jude obtains the custody of his child by Arabella, Little Father Time, who is given into his keeping, despite Sue's initial shrinking from the poor little fellow. Then, owing to various causes, they take to a nomadic life, and Arabella, who is now a widow, subsequently learns of Jude's poverty and ill-health from Sue, who is obliged to sell cakes at a fair. He recovers some measure of health, and the Fawleys remove to Christminster, where the tragic end of the children takes place. Overcome by a conviction of the wrongfulness of her position, Sue returns to Phillotson, leaving Jude a prey to Arabella, who once more inveigles him into marriage. While she is enjoying an afternoon's pleasure, Jude the Obscure dies alone, unloved and untended.

The Well-Beloved

(1897).

Scenes : The Gibraltar of Wessex, Budmouth Regis, London.

CHARACTERS.

Jocelyn Pierston.	Mrs. Pine-Avon.
Mrs. Caro.	Lady Channelcliffe.
Avice the First.	Grammer Stockwool.
Avice the Second.	Isaac Pierston.
Avice the Third.	Henri Leverre.
Marcia Bencomb.	Mrs. Kibbs.
Alfred Somers.	Captain Kibbs.

Quarriers, smart society people, etc.

When Jocelyn Pierston the sculptor finds himself again among his native rocks, he is re-impressed by the unique character of his island home. Mrs. Caro accosts him with simple heartiness, and Avice, her daughter, greets him with an impulsive kiss, which is regretted the moment it is given. Companionship with the girl in the days of childhood gives Pierston an advantage in the suit he presses with ardour; the time for his departure arrives, and Avice views it with the serenity of one who is engaged. Ere turning his back on the island, Pierston encounters Miss Bencomb, a daughter of his father's trade rival, the circumstances of meeting being peculiar and some-

what unconventional. While journeying to London together, Pierston awakes to find his Well-Beloved incarnated in this new friend. A curious concatenation of events renders his impulsive offer of marriage agreeable to her, and when they part, it is with the intention of being made man and wife. Confiding in Somers, Pierston dwells on the fluctuations of his affections, the pursuit of the Well-Beloved, and its temporary embodiments; but his friend vetoes the precipitate intention to wed the fair Bencomb, who, in turn, is prevented from giving perpetuity to an erratic whim. Pierston immerses himself in the distractions of work, and time brings professional successes, and the visionary quest beckons him onward till he is forty years of age, when his father dies, and having attended to the details in the will, a reposeful time ensues. This is broken into by Mrs. Pine-Avon, a lady whom Pierston fondly hopes will prove the permanent abode of the Dream. Her society is sought, her words listened to, her nature subjected to scrutiny and analysis. Before definite opinions resolve themselves out of these meditations, the news of Avice's death dissolves all images of sophisticated womanhood, and sends Pierston to the island again. Here he is enthralled by another Avice, the daughter of the former one, and forgetting his age his heart inclines to pay court to this seeming re-



THE QUAY, "BUDMOUTH REGIS"

From an old Photo by Wheeler, Weymouth

incarnation of his sweetheart. Once more in London, he wanders one afternoon round the wharves where his native stone is unshipped, and sees Avice the Second, who is paying a flying visit to the Metropolis, and when she returns he follows her, and takes up his abode in the old haunts. Age does not touch his heart, and in a tentative manner he seeks an abiding place for it in this vision of the past, though, at first, Avice the Second does not notice the drift of his regard. The appearance of Mrs. Pine-Avon rather disturbs Pierston in these subtle engagements, and he is further perturbed by confronting a replica of his own temperament in the girl he admires, who, together with himself, yearns for the realization of an impossible idea. Although he hears of a lover younger than himself his dream does not fade. While this mood holds Pierston, Somers visits the island, and receives the usual confidences, and then glides away in the track of Mrs. Pine-Avon, whom he subsequently marries. Avice's changeableness gives Pierston an opportunity of bringing about a closer association, and taking a flat in London, he prevails upon her to take charge of it. Here he proposes marriage to Avice the Second, who rejects his offer, because she is already married, and after this confession she returns to the ancestral home. During the following twenty years the mutations of the Well-Beloved

are many, until at last, at the age of sixty, Pierston falls a victim to Avice the Third, the grand-daughter of his first love, but again his attempt to wed one of that name is frustrated, and he ends his sentimental pilgrimage by a union with Marcia, one of the other youthful incarnations.

THE PAGEANTRY OF THE PAST

THOUGH ancient Wessex roughly comprised the whole of south-west England, the term now principally, though not entirely, denotes Dorset. As this county figures prominently in the history of the ancient Saxon kingdom, and as it is Mr. Thomas Hardy's native county, it receives but a fitting tribute in being so emphasized. Knowledge is pushed beyond its limitations, and imagination has to be invoked in order to describe the first conquerors of Wessex, the Iberic race, of whom there are but scanty details. They come floating to us from the past on the ghostly sea of tradition with nothing to shed light on their human concerns. Some knowledge of seamanship they must have possessed, but how were their ships steered across the uncharted

waters, what were their motives in seeking this remote isle, and how did they learn its situation? History does not answer these questions, and only states that the Iberic race were related to the people mentioned by Tacitus as occupying the north-western portion of Spain. The scattered boulders at Portisham, known as the Hellstone, also belong to a prehistoric period, it probably being of the same age as Stonehenge. Originally it was a long barrow, containing nine stones in its centre supporting a long topstone. The covering earth has been worn away by the lapse of centuries and the stones are exposed to view, as in many other instances. It is generally considered to be the burial place of some great chieftain, or man of eminence, and judging from analogy, the interment must have been accompanied by all the ceremonial the rude condition of the ancient folk could muster, in order to be in keeping with the simple grandeur of the tomb. These rugged stones on the crown of a bare hill, beyond the range of the generally used roadways, have carried down the generations the protest of early mankind against oblivion, and testify to an intelligence sufficiently cultured to evince a desire to honour the dead, and project their personalities into the future. Hellstone was also a place of divination in subsequent years, the home of some Druid who prophetically scanned the Heavens, giving warning of approaching foes, or

governing the turbulent tendencies of the barbarians who came to him for counsel. It is fragrant with memories of the heathen Northland, the name Hell-stone denoting its former consecration to the goddess Hel, whom the All-Father of the Northern mythology hurled into Niflheim, where she received authority over all who died of sickness or old age. Sanguinary sacrifices were made to this deity, and it is more than likely the time-whitened stones surmounting Portisham hill once streamed with sacrificial blood. With the opening of the Celtic era, the area of conjecture is narrowed, and it can be definitely stated that the Celts occupied Dorset, as well as the other portions of Southern England, subsequently to be known as Wessex.

Concerning the men called Celts, a vitalizing survival of them is found in Maiden Castle, two miles from Dorchester in a southerly direction. A countryman who was once questioned as to the origin of these earthworks, said: "The Romangs did do it, zur, vor they was a terr'ble double-backed people, an' strong as 'osses." But, according to Mr. H. J. Moule, the Dorset antiquarian, the castle, the finest and best preserved of its kind in England, owed its origin to the Celts, who built it for the purposes of defence. In erecting its treble ramparts and ditches, they showed wonderful skill, their ingenuity in making the approach intricate,

by overlapping the ends of the ramparts, testifying to a cunning fostered by dangerous necessity. As a rule, however, the Celts did not fight behind earthen walls, but hand to hand in the open, with a valour and dash which won for them the following encomium from an old Roman poet: "Foes are they, fierce beyond other foes, and cunning as they are fierce; they are sea wolves that live on the pillage of the world; the sea is their school of war, and the storm their friend." Light chariots formed their most effective weapon in warfare, and these were used with astounding effect, the clangour of their brazen wheels at a later time quite disconcerting the legionaries of Rome when they surged to the onslaught on Maiden Castle.

The Celts buried the bodies or ashes of their chiefs in barrows, many of which still crest the Wessex hills. Concerning some of these barrows opened in his presence, Mr. Thomas Hardy wrote a paper which appeared in the Transactions of the Dorset Archæological Society, describing the pottery they contained, and the position and condition of the corpses, which, by the bye, he designated as belonging to a Romano-British period. In the same paper the novelist allowed his imagination to play around his native town as it would have appeared in the early ages. "It would be a worthy attempt to rehabilitate the living Durnovaria of fourteen or fifteen hundred years ago, as it actually

appeared to the eyes of the then Dorchester men and women, under the rays of the same morning and evening sun which rises and sets over it now. What kind of object did Dorchester then form in the summer landscape—where stood the large buildings—how did the roofs group themselves—what were the gardens like, if any—what social character had the streets? What were the customary noises—what sort of exterior was exhibited by these hybrid Romano-British people, apart from the soldiery—were the passengers up and down the way few in number, or did they ever form a busy throng such as we now see on a market day?" Traces of the earlier inhabitants are also found in the entrenchments at Beacon Hill, Kingsclere, Bury Hill near Andover, Druidical stones at Stanton Drew, Somerset, and the foundations of a lake village near Glastonbury.

The light of Christianity was cast over the district long before the advent of St. Augustine, and within seventy years of the establishment of the Christian era. Although the light is impalpable, and but a deduction from fragmentary evidence, it is worthy of record, because it links the "Garden of England," as an old chronicler termed Dorset, to the Christian community who suffered persecution under Nero the infamous, and a cloud of fascinating conjectures is thereby unloosed. Further, the

valiant Apostle St. Paul is connected with this district by a series of associations, vague, but nevertheless traceable. In order to suggest these associations it will be necessary to form an imaginary conception of the Apostle as he painfully wrote his letters to Timothy. The time had come for him to make his *vale* to the world. After the touching reference to his cloak, he continues: "Do thy diligence to come before the winter. Eubulus greeteth thee, and Pudens, and Linus, and Claudia, and all the brethren." The significance of the passage in this instance is contained in the mention of Pudens and Claudia. This lady was a Briton, the daughter of King Cogidubinus or Cogidunus, a western chieftain who surrendered to the Roman army under Claudius, to whose aid came Vespasian from Germany, his task being the attack on Dorset. But it is in the records of Ostorius Scapula most of the information concerning Cogidunus is found, and there it is stated he was an ally of the Romans and ruled an extensive territory embracing Surrey, Sussex and the sea coast of Hants and Dorset. Cogidunus was created a Roman citizen in return for his services, and it seems only fitting he should have perpetuated the memory of his pleasant relations with the conquerors by giving his daughter the name of Claudia. This British lady is reputed to be the wife of Pudens, the distinguished Roman mentioned by St.

Paul, a conjecture strengthened by the discovery of an inscription at Chichester bearing their joint names, and further fortified by the existence of a hundred of land near Wareham called Cogdean, a name supposed to have been derived from its once being in the possession of Cogidunus. These facts, when they are taken in conjunction with the mention of these early Christians by Martial between A.D. 66 and 100, establish a case not to be altogether overthrown, though the subsequent assumptions are not founded on well-proven evidence. The exact position Pudens occupied in the Roman world cannot be ascertained, but tradition gives him a place of some importance in the State. That neither he nor his wife Claudia openly befriended St. Paul at his first trial is proved by the passage wherein he says: "At my first answer no man took my part, but all forsook me and fled." This remark imputes a charge of cowardice against them, mitigated, however, by the initial courage they displayed in running counter to the patrician point of view, by joining themselves to the body of lowly and despised Christians. Yet, as the Apostle definitely sent their greeting in his letter to Timothy, it must naturally be inferred they visited him occasionally during his confinement. Perhaps no chamber has ever contained a trio so oddly contrasted as did that Roman prison: the Roman and his British lady,

aghast at the emaciated prisoner, marred by the wounds they could neither see nor heal, for the light was dim, and the Apostle's strength utterly exhausted. Urged thither by the sublime unconventionality of their faith, they listened to the words carried to them on the ebbing breath of the Apostle, subdued by the memory of their desertion of him, and startled by the clank of his chains, as the old fervour fired his heart and leaped into his arms. There they stood, representatives of different nationalities, Jew, Roman and Briton, sundered and yet united by the love power of Him they worshipped. Thus Claudia, the forerunner of Wessex womanhood, is left fulfilling a mission of comfort.

The earliest known emblem of the Christian faith in Britain was discovered in the Wessex village of Frampton, during the reign of George III. In the pattern of the Roman pavement then uncovered was the Chi-Rho, or first two letters in Greek of the name of Christ. This emblem formed a species of masonic sign among the early faithful. Side by side with this devout token there was an anomalous ascription to Neptune, and the head of that deity ejecting dolphins out of his mouth. This confusion of ideas is by no means surprising in an early convert; although the heathen gods were dispossessed from his heart in favour of Christ, he liked to see them figuring on the

tiling of his floors, perhaps for the sake of old associations. The pavement in what was evidently another living room contained a medallion of a mild and beneficent head, surrounded by a nimbus. Some antiquarians of repute consider it to be a portrait of Christ, but it is a moot point, and must be left as such.

Abundant testimony to the Roman occupation exists in Wessex to this day; relics of her masterful legions are being continually turned up by the plough, and mementoes of the occupation of the soil by an alien race abound. After the conquest of Britain, the expansive policy of the Romans compelled them to recruit their legions among the vanquished people, and it is more than probable the legion stationed in Wessex was largely composed of native soldiery. Such was the prestige and power of Rome that she maintained peace among the barbarians for three hundred years, among them being the race of the Durotriges, an offshoot of the Celts and the ancient inhabitants of Dorset, who were conquered by Vespasian. According to Suetonius, this general fought thirty hotly contested battles, and captured twenty towns or camps, including Poundbury, important earthworks which are still in existence on the outskirts of Dorchester. This place constituted the fortress of the neighbouring town of Dunium, mentioned by Tacitus and

inhabited by the Durotriges. Excavations between the western ramparts have brought to light some British pottery, flint implements and a Roman spur. The simple Durotriges must have viewed the vigorous possession of the soil with sullen amazement; from their lurking places in the woods they would have watched the practical activities of the conquerors with awe, taking the mechanical genius of the Romans to be god-like, and reverence-compelling. Soon after the conquest the countryside became quiet, a state of things effectually maintained by the establishment of several military camps. The Romans were not hard taskmasters, and left the vanquished a good deal of freedom in matters of self-government, but they were obliged to pay tribute to Caesar, to bow to the imperial law, and submit to the seizure and partition of their land among foreigners. Pastimes and pleasures followed conquest, and in order partly to gratify themselves, and partly to win the goodwill of the barbarians, the Romans introduced into Wessex their national sport—gladiatorial combats. Leaving out of consideration other parts of the West Saxon kingdom, vestiges of Roman work have been found in Dorset in eighty places, Hants and Somerset also being rich in these mementoes. After a while, the primitive islanders took kindly to the control of the new order, and doubtless the Durotriges benefited in the development of

the land, by imitating the methods of the victorious aliens—skilful farmers who were inclined to conciliate the uncouth people according to their well known policy of colonization. Not one of the least important results of the Roman occupation was the order their highly organized skill brought out of the tangled and chaotic face of the country. Field measurers or surveyors laid out a town after the pattern of a camp, not only round Dorchester, but elsewhere in Wessex; they marked out a broad road east and west, in line with the chief street of the town, and constructed another north and south. Dotted here and there about the countryside were the splendid residences of the Roman colonists, some of them being erected at the period when the Apostles were prosecuting their missionary journeys.

The ages are strangely jumbled together in and around the neighbourhood of Mr. Thomas Hardy's home, but the year 1899 saw the most noteworthy discovery—the site of a large Roman villa with a tesselated floor measuring forty feet by twenty feet. This paving is presumed to have been the floor of the drawing-room, opening at one end into a garden, and at the other to a court with dining-rooms on either side. These apartments were conveniently situated near the reception rooms, which in their turn led to another chamber opening into the atrium and con-

tiguous to the vestibule, a plan which met the two chief requirements of the lordly Roman—privacy and ostentation. When the wealthy patrician went forth with a bevy of slaves and clients at his heels, the curious onlookers could see the chief glories of the house in one vista—the upward floating water in the fountain against the greenery, the sunlight drift upon brilliant pavement and rich hangings, and servants in humble postures. When the front door closed, the noble tenant was hidden from prying eyes, there being no outer windows. How vividly the Romans stamped their individuality upon the country is illustrated by the streamlet at Preston, Dorset, spanned by a bridge still eloquent with the dominance and capacity of its builders, the men of the Eternal City. Boys now fish from its cope with crooked pins; villagers living on the other side of the rivulet daily tread its rough arch, with as much confidence in its safety as the iron-heeled conqueror of his remote forbears. Its permanence is appalling, and contemplating it, the mind is shocked by the suggestion of eternity in human handiwork. The attitude of the rustic to these tokens of subjugation to a foreigner has been either one of stolid indifference or vague superstition. For instance, a valuable find was made at Belbury Camp in 1881, consisting of the top mountings of two helmets, a dagger blade, part of the facing of a shield, and some

rings. These fell into the hands of an old woman, who prized them for reasons not at all archæological. According to her own account, "She wer fo'c'd to send 'em to 'er son, for he were terr'ble bad, an' did sort o' pine for 'em." And she too thought: "Thic brass dog (helmet fittings) a-nail'd ovver dwor'd do'en a power o' good."

The departure of the Romans from these shores in A.D. 456 struck the doom note of the Empire, but it prepared the way for the foundation of the Wessex kingdom. As the cohorts gathered around the standards, a feeling of dread must have taken hold of the British folk, who were thus laid open to the attacks of their enemies. Millais, who depicted the final embarkation of the Romans, took as the background of his picture a view of the Lulworth coast, but it is not certain whether the legions did set sail from the Dorset shore. Certain it is, however, that the withdrawal of the iron-hearted troops wore a sinister aspect in the estimation of the British, who had learnt to repose with confidence under the bulwarks of their supremacy. Having lived side by side with the Romans for over three hundred years, the rudiments of arts and handicrafts had been implanted, together with a friendly interchange of rude amenities. The heart of many a wife and maiden—forerunners of Wessex's womanhood—must have ached at the sound

of the gathering legions as they marched away to the sea and across it to the aid of the city in need of their staunchest fealty.

Roman warships had gone, Roman soldiers had marched away never to return, and the British were left to face their enemies alone. The invaders came, but the West Saxons found Wessex hard to win; the people were still as formidable to encounter as in the days of the Roman conquest; neither luxury nor vice had vitiated their energies, and they turned at bay with fierce powers of resistance at their command. Wessex was the name of a people, not of a land. The kingdom was founded by Cerdic and Cynric, two Saxon ealdormen, who landed on the coast of Hants in A.D. 495, assuming the kingly title after a lapse of twenty-four years. At the outset, they won a decisive victory, and this put them in possession of the open country round Winchester, thereafter to be the capital of the kingdom. A closely fought encounter occurred at Bindon Hill, Dorset, a continuation of the Purbeck chalk ridge, insulated and precipitous, a brief mention of the engagement being found in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: "Now Cynegils and Curchelm fought on Beandune, and slew two thousand and sixty-five Welsh." Yet, not without stern resistance did the Saxons pour westward until the district was finally conquered, the period of time occupied in doing so

being over one hundred and twenty years. The victors were composed of different tribes—Engles, Jutes, and Saxons proper; when each horde landed, it appropriated a piece of country, and set up its chief as king, and then began to war among themselves, first one and then another becoming predominant. This internecine strife ended in the rulers of Wessex rising to the position of chief kings, and ultimately the paramount ones in England.

Considered as colonists, the Saxons were inferior to the Romans both in civilization and mechanical arts; they destroyed public buildings, and tried to obliterate every trace of the Roman occupation, erected dwellings that were little more than wooden sheds, and stamped out Christianity. That Wessex was a district of considerable importance in Saxon times, is proved by the kingly burials in several of the churches, Brightric being interred at Wareham, Athelbald and Athelbryght at Sherborne, and Ethelred and Cuthburgh at Wimborne. In the construction of their churches at a later date, the Saxons used Roman materials and utilized Roman architectural features, instanced by the Romano-Saxon tower arch at Corbridge, and perhaps the two transept arches at Britford. When Breamore Church, Hants, was repaired a few years ago, it was discovered to be unmistakably Saxon; thus there are in the district

a few living vestiges of the revival of Christianity under Augustine.

Indomitable love must have urged Aidan, the secluded missionary of Iona's monastery, into the heathendom of the West Saxon world, where, in 636, he partially succeeded in re-implanting the religion of Christ. What satisfaction in living, what hope in dying, had those early Wessex folk ere the arrival of Aidan? What consolation had they in adversity, what weapons against the foes neither sword nor spear could subdue? Woden worship flourished—the eerie unkempt woods appalled them with malignly supernatural possibilities; but though barbarous and untutored, their natures must have been moulded to finer issues, as their reception of Aidan's message was by no means unfavourable. But the Song of the Galilean Shepherds—the avatar of a new reign and a new kingdom—found no immediate and widespread response in Saxon policy; and though it may have imparted an imperceptible desire for peace, the conditions of the age prevented the growth of it. The racial instincts were savage; blood soon went mad in those days, and hand and heart were swayed by the rude delights of warfare. The periods succeeding the conversion of Wessex were filled with battles, linked to the names of Eadwine, Beorhtric and Ecgbert, the monarch who bore the first brunt of the Danes,

the fierce marauders who poured into the kingdom through the creeks along the Hants and Dorset coast.

But here and there the severities of this implacable age were illuminated by incidents of a more beneficent character. In 705 St. Aldhelm — after whom the headland on the Dorset coast has been named—was consecrated first bishop of Sherborne, and in 718 Cuthburgh, sister of Ina, founded the monastery at Wimborne. Athelwulf, who followed Ecgberht in 839, fought strenuously for his realm against the Danes, who threatened the faith of his people, as well as their liberty. These heathen raids roused the clergy, and Swithun, bishop of Winchester, and Ealhstan, bishop of Sherborne, came forward as soldiers of the Cross under the leadership of Athelwulf, who, at the head of his men, drove the invaders beyond the Parret. The colossal figure of Alfred stepped into the light of history in 871, and with the energy of his remarkable character marshalled his forces, and threw them against the foe. Subsequently, the Danes stole away to Wareham, where the great Wessex king made peace with them, they giving hostages and swearing to him they would leave his kingdom. But the Danes broke their word, and while part of their fleet were under sail westward, a storm arose, and one hundred and twenty vessels were driven

ashore at Swanawic (Swanage), while the land forces joined hands with the Welsh at Exeter, where they eventually succumbed to Alfred's spirited attack. Terms of peace were again agreed upon, but the Wessex king had scarcely disbanded his troops ere his enemies re-appeared at Chippenham with reinforcements, and laid waste the country. With a small band of followers Alfred retired into the Somerset marshes, and at the approach of Spring, issued forth to muster the men of Hants, Wilts and Somerset, and defeating the foe at Edington, compelled the Danish leader to a solemn peace at Wedmore, and thereby turned the tide of the invasion, and saved England from the Danish yoke. Wonderful sidelights on the character of this capable leader are cast by his constant efforts to enlighten his people. Though a soldier king, habituated to the noises of the camp, and inured to the rigours of campaigns, with strenuous demands on his practical sagacity, yet, a lover of calm and the exercises usually associated with monkish seclusion. It would be no exaggeration to say King Alfred the Great made himself the servant of his people, and in his own life set them an example of temperance, justice and self-sacrifice almost saintly in its consistency. He strengthened the machinery of Government which had been weakened by the Danish storm, reorganized the administration of justice, and brought into being an edu-

cational movement. Legislation and conflict, statecraft and letters, simple piety and daring, these qualities combine to make Alfred's name luminous in the night of history.

Of the Norman Conquest there are few traces. Still formidable in its decay, a castle keep frowns from a crag on the shore of Portland, and the influences of the period are discernible in the architecture of some of the churches. The emphasis of the connexion of Wessex with the history of England during the reigns of the first six Norman kings must be laid on Corfe Castle, in the Island of Purbeck. Ages before the lords of this stronghold claimed the vessels from Languedoc and Cadiz that were wrecked on the neighbouring shore, the Celt seized upon the naked hill, and after him the Saxon and the Dane. Whoever in the days of its magnificence came to be constable of that stronghold, held within his iron-fibred hand the issues of life and death; sitting in the castle of Corfe and gazing upon the straw-thatched hovels of the serfs beneath, the Norman baron luxuriated in his power, and felt himself to be far removed from human limitations. Royal feasting went on within its walls—rights of venison and vert in many a distant chase, free warren round about, assize of beer and toll from the nets of fishers, falcons from the forest and fish from the sea, tithes and royalties on the fruits

of the earth, wooed from the soil by the labourers of those days; from all these channels were the revellings maintained. Its dungeoned solitudes wasted the sinews of knights of high degree, whose honesty, or wrong-headed honour, collided with kingly purposes or aroused royal jealousies; esquires were chained to its walls for offences only known to their captors, and well born dames were kept in milder seclusion, because of their relationship to rebellious princes or barons. King John visited Corfe during the last year of his reign, and also stayed at other places in the district. Residences were owned by him at Cranborne and Gillingham, and the Rolls of the Exchequer for the period contain many quaint entries of disbursements and receipts in relation to the administration of Wessex, including: cost of robes supplied to people in the king's service, expenses in connexion with the removal of hostages, fines for breaches of forest rules, the upkeep of the king's mansions, and scutage money. Nothing is heard of Corfe during the reigns of Henry III and Edward I, and it is only associated by tradition with the name of the second Edward, as one of the grisly retreats found for him by the barons; records also being silent about Wessex for those periods, during which time the people must have been contentedly following their primitive employments. But in 1348 this land of quietude was the avenue through

which a devastating plague swept into England, brought, it is said, from China to the southern shore. Inland it spread, killing, according, to one chronicler, nine-tenths of the population. Owing to the dreadful scarcity of mouths to be fed, prices were exceedingly low. Threepence would buy an ewe, and six and eightpence a horse, though the price of labour rose. The life religious now flourished extensively, there hardly being a considerable town without its monastery; during the plague time the members of the Benedictine and Cistercian orders, resident in Wessex, doubtless fulfilled their threefold duties of doctor, nurse, and priest, with that zeal for God and man which still inspired them to be the faithful servants of the community.

One who figured prominently in ecclesiastical affairs first saw the light in 1420 at the village of Milborne St. Andrew—John Morton, subsequently Cardinal and Archbishop of Canterbury. On his mother's side he was nearly related to Richard Turberville, head of a noble house and bearer of a name familiar in that day, but better known in this, owing to its associations with one of the finest of the Wessex novels. According to one of John Morton's biographers, the locality of his birth was a pleasant one: "A countrie p'fitable for pasture and husbandrie, ffamous for people and commercers, renowned for ciuilitie and riches,

and much com'ended for entertaynement and hospitalitie." Concerning his childhood and youth, the narrator continues: "Euen as far as his first youth was spent at home under the tutelage of worthy parents and discreet schoole masters. ffro' thence he was remoued to the University of Oxford, where he prospered so well that in short space he became a man fully furnyshed with all the excellencies, both of learning and vertue." Gaining several preferments, John Morton diverted some of his energies to law and politics, and although the cause of Henry VI was in its declension, took office under that monarch. Fighting at the battle of Towton with the king, he was sent into exile, and afterwards landed with Warwick from Angers. After the battle of Barnet in 1471, the cardinal met Margaret of Anjou at Weymouth, she having landed with some forces raised abroad in order to assist the Earl of Warwick; but the very day she disembarked he was defeated and slain. Being an adherent of the Red Rose of Lancaster, Morton conveyed the Queen Mother to the sanctuary of Cerne Abbey, and the swirl of the stormy time then bore him into the tides of life that were sweeping round the victorious Edward IV.

When the heart of England was roused by the conflict between Protestantism and Romanism in 1588, the sons of Wessex came to the front to repel

the expected invaders. Each town along the coast sent good ships and true, and better men to man them, in order to meet the greatest maritime power in the world, Spain. Letters from statesmen of that period advising the chief magistrates on points of defence still exist, but the sea dogs of the southern shore needed no urging; their slight war vessels leapt after the scudding fleet, and clung to them with the pertinacity of the national bull-dog, until the so-called invincible Armada were either sunk or cast ashore.

The trifling humanities and the gossip and unconsidered writings of a man of a by-gone age often supply an interesting commentary on academic history. Of the Wessexman, William Whiteway, whose diary is now in the British Museum, nothing of material interest is known, save that his worldly station enabled him to hear the news of the period—1618–1634. Events of large national importance were noted by him, side by side with minor domestic accounts, and the tattle of the tavern and the market-place. Doubtless, thinking the appearance of "a blazing star in the south east which continued" portended some disaster to the realm, he entered it in his pages as a matter by no means to be overlooked. Under the date, June 14, 1620, there is this personal brevity: "I, William Whiteway, was married to Eleanor Parkins in the presence of the greatest part of the town [Dorchester],

which marriage I pray God to bless, that it may turn to His glory and our good, and the comfort of all our friends." The hint of vanity in the reference to the number of people attending the wedding, brings the old chronicler within arm-touch of the present day, and if Mistress Eleanor wore "the cappe of woll knit, price six shillings" mentioned later, it is to be feared her gay appearance did not greatly console those of her lady friends who could seldom afford such luxury of adornment. Concerning this "cappe of woll knit," it had been ordained by the maternal Government of Elizabeth that such headdress should be worn on Sabbaths, and other holy days, in order to encourage home industries, and the statute then stood unrepealed; the penalty for the breach of it being a fine of three shillings and fourpence.

Nor did greater liberty touching freedom of speech prevail, as proved by the following passage. Echoed in it is the muttered thunder of the coming Civil War: "There came into the country a proclamation to forbid all men to speak of matters of State, either of this kingdom or of any other place, upon pain of His Majesty's displeasure." In the year when Lord Bacon was impeached, we are informed: "It was a very great year of plums, so that a peck was sold for a penny," a fact very vital to the rural district, no doubt. Current rumours were also set down, as instanced by this

entry: "There came news of the Prince (Charles) his arrival at Portsmouth, and ballads were made of it, but it proved false; the ballad singers were sent to prison. While we were at London, a man ready to be buried revived, and lived half a day." Grim times were they for previous ballad singers, but the hour loomed near when their tuneful numbers could flow for Charles without let or hindrance. Grimmer times, however, were they for the sick, and the friends who lived with them in the same house, according to this entry: "The sickness was suspected to be in the house of Paul, the hatter, because three of his house died in fifteen days, and his house was shut up five or six weeks; but God be praised, it was not so, but some pestilent fever." The closure of houses reputed to be infected with the plague was made compulsory in order to limit the spread of the disease, and watchmen were appointed to prevent the inhabitants leaving them. They were occasionally empowered to inflict punishment on fractious persons in health who rebelled against this enactment, and old documents contain entries of small sums of money paid for whipping them. The Wessex diarist showed a pleasant appreciation of the inconspicuous side of every-day life—its chance amenities, wayside gossip and tavern talk; he had a pretty wit, and when there happened to be a dearth of likely news, contented

himself with anecdote. Being socially inclined, he must have gathered quite a collection of stories ; his instinct for selection being proved by the transcription of the following example : " An officer of the custome at Melcomb went abord a ship to search, and perceived a goodly quantity of leather (an article upon which duty was payable), and said to the owner that stood by : ' What do I see yonder ? Methinks I see leather.' The merchant said nothing, but clapt two pieces of gold before the officer's eyes, and asked him what he did see now ? The officer said, ' Nothing,' and sware that gold was the worst metall in the worlde to make spectacles of."

When the storm broke whose echoes reverberated in William Whiteway's diary, Wessex in general took the side of Parliament, though certain towns and districts espoused the Royalist cause. Backwards and forwards the opposing hosts swept across the country—buff jerkin and flashing armour streaking the downs, cavalier plumes a-toss in the sunny air—sombrely garbed Roundheads in hot pursuit, rallying, attacking, scheming, retreating, weaving a network of passion over the bosom of nature.

The hurtle of battle raged around the Castle of Corfe, the symbol of the traditions that were being guarded, and it succumbed to the Roundheads, who, by the order of Parliament, shattered it into ruins.

The fire spirit of war burnt high during these years, and in 1645 the countrymen, who were termed Clubmen, armed themselves with bludgeons to the number of four thousand, and engaged Cromwell at Hambledon Hill, near Sherborne. Referring to this engagement, the great Protector said in one of his letters: "They refused to submit . . . and fired on us. The passage not being far above three abreast kept us out, whereupon Major Desborow wheeled about, got in the rear of them, beat them from their work, and did some small execution upon them. . . . We have taken about three hundered, many of which are poor silly creatures, whom if you please to let me send home, promise to be very dutiful from time to come, and 'will be hanged' before they come out again." It is believed these Clubmen belonged to neither party, but were the enemy of any troup of soldiers who attempted to break the peace; seemingly, jaded by a quarrel not to be understood by their simple minds, they asserted their point of view in this bellicose manner.

Sometimes destiny gives an ironic shuffle to the cards of life, and if the humble are not thereby exalted, the mighty are often pulled down from their seats. Rarely in the history of civilized States have such plebeian experiences happened to any monarch as befell Charles II, the debonnaire trifler. After the battle of Worcester, 1651, he tasted many of life's

flavours, some of them being rather nauseous to a regal palate. Desiring to escape to France, the fugitive king hastened into the west of England, and while attempting to put his plan into execution, assimilated some democratic knowledge of the ways and speech of common folk, always a salutary experience for human superfinities. While in hiding at Trent, the idea was first suggested that Charles should make his escape from the coast of Wessex. An agreement was entered into with Stephen Limbry, of Lyme Regis, to convey the king by water from Charmouth roads across the Channel with the despatch necessitated by the unfortunate condition of the fugitive, who, according to the gentleman who undertook the negotiations, was the servant of a bankrupt merchant fleeing from his creditors. But it happened that the wife of the shipmaster had her doubts about the identity of the two men her husband intended to convey to France, and on the night of the sailing she locked him in his bedroom like a discreet woman. She had been to the fair at Lyme and read the proclamation of the punishments to be enforced against those who should harbour Charles Stuart, or any of his adherents. The route then taken by the king and his friends is described in Harrison Ainsworth's novel, *Boscobel*. Arriving at Bridport in the guise of a servitor, he boldly pushed his way into the yard of the

George Inn, where the ostler claimed his acquaintanceship. Maintaining his composure, Charles learnt the man had lived at an inn at Exeter, close to the house of a Mr. Potter, who had entertained the Royal Staff during the Civil Wars. "Friend," said Charles, good-humouredly, "you must certainly have seen me at Mr. Potter's, for I served him above a year." Accepting this explanation, the man went away, promising to return and drink a pot of beer with the stranger, who immediately pushed on his way back to Trent. Meanwhile, suspicions were developing into definite assertions at Charmouth concerning the identity of the disguised monarch and his friends who had so recently left. A shrewd artisan, Hammet by name, who had shoed one of the gentlemen's horses, remarked to the resident Puritan minister, Bartholomew Wesley: "The horse had but three shoes, and they were all set in different counties, and one in Worcestershire." With all speed the reverend gentleman then went to the inn where the guests had stayed, in the hope of entrapping the hostess into a confession. "Why, how now, Margaret?" quoth he; "you are a maid of honour." "What mean you by that, Mr. Parson?" replied Margaret tartly. "Why Charles Stuart lay last night at your house, and kissed you at his departure, so that you now cannot but be a maid of honour." Waxing wroth, the woman told

him he was a scurvy-conditioned man to go about to bring her and the house into trouble. "But," said she, "if I thought it was the king as you say it was, I should think the better of my lips all the days of my life. So, Mr. Parson, get you out of my house, or I'll get those who shall kick you out."

The first act in the struggle precipitated by the death of Charles occurred at Lyme Regis on June 11, 1685. James had succeeded to the throne, but the nation was dissatisfied with his Roman Catholicism. Relying for support on his own personal orthodoxy in matters religious, the Duke of Monmouth disembarked on the Wessex coast, with only two hundred and thirty men all told. When the ship bearing the duke cast anchor, one Bernard Browne, keeper of an alehouse, hastily emerged from the shadow of his porch; two men bearing the great standard of Monmouth dashed by him, shouting lustily as its folds flew out to the wind. Ere the humble tavern keeper could adjust his mind to the full import of this incident, the duke approached, and taking him by the hand, asked him, "Art thou for me?" In a moment the man's cap was in his hand, and he answered with alacrity, "Yes, sire," and the duke smiled indulgently. "Thou art an honest fellow. I'll take care and provide for thee; thou deservest encouragement." Ill equipped, but well served by raw and lowly devotees

on country ponies, Monmouth pushed on through Axminster to Taunton, there to be warmly welcomed —then onward to the Sedgemoor debâcle, and the final ending by the headsman's axe. But what of the humble countrymen of Wilts, Somerset, Dorset, Hants and Devon who were urged by religious enthusiasm to march under his standard? They were driven to the prisons, and Judge Jeffreys sentenced three hundred and twenty-eight of them to death, and eight hundred and forty-nine to transportation; these were sent as slaves to the plantations in America. Those who were to be executed were distributed about the country to different towns—poor martyred zealots of the West—there to be hung, drawn and quartered. There are still municipal records in existence attesting to the expenses incurred in fulfilling these gruesome behests, such as: "To a bill of disbursements for ye Gallows, Burning and Boiling ye Rebells, executed p Ordr . . . £16 4. 8. Pd. Mr. Mayor att ye Beare, for so much hee pd for new setting up of a post wth ye quartrs of ye Rebells att ye towne end, as p his bill, 1/6½." Even tiny hamlets were compelled to exhibit these dreadful mementoes; and here and there traditions still exist of dried heads from Sedgemoor fight, being fixed on spikes and exhibited on the gables of church porches.

One destined to make England feel the impact of

his personality bore arms for the Duke of Monmouth. Daniel Defoe was associated at one time with Wessex. The conflict between those who had taken the oath to Queen Anne's dynasty and the non-jurors who refused—the war between Church and Dissent, and between Whigs and Tories, engendered a mass of political pamphlets, of which those of Daniel Defoe and Swift were the best. The persecutions of party made 1705 a disquieting year to Defoe, who then journeyed westward; perhaps his own business of tile-making drew him into that part of the country, a further inducement being the chance it afforded of visiting his daughters, who were living at Wimborne. Probably, however, his chief reason for undertaking this long journey was the acceptance of a commission from his friend Harley to visit the small and numerous western boroughs to promote the election of Ministerial candidates to Parliament. According to his own account, Defoe suffered danger "through the proceedings of foolish justices," although he was prosecuting a mission "about his Lawful Occasions, several Unmanlike and Unreasonable insults were met with on the road." Referring to the proceedings of the "foolish justices," Defoe wrote in his review: "What means the bleating of such kind of cattle . . . they are reserved for a sacrifice. A Wise Man ought to sacrifice them all to his peace, that is, not concern

himself with anything they say or do; but looking upon them as 'Maz'd Men,' as they say in that country, pass on to the Great Work before them, without disturbing himself about them."

The revival of religious sentiment in England under the Wesleys broke in upon the almost pagan life of the rustics, and aroused them to a sense of the divinities of existence. John Wesley, the grandfather of the founder of Methodism, sought a refuge at the Dorset village of Preston, when his refusal to subscribe to the Act of Uniformity deprived him of his living, and there, it is supposed, he died. Methodist influence is first heard of in the county in 1743, when on his way from Cornwall to London, Charles Wesley stayed at Bridport, and there met a woman with whom he conversed. It was said by him that "she was ready for the Gospel," and when he spoke to her, "she fell a-trembling and a-weeping"; and kneeling down, he prayed and then left her, feeling assured she was "not far from the Kingdom." The experiences of the early preachers and converts in Wessex made them brothers in milder affliction with St. Paul. They were driven about like felons, pelted by mobs, falsely imprisoned, their houses attacked, their persons endangered, their bodies exhausted by long journeyings, on foot, by coach, and sea; they were hindered by religious jealousies, yet overcame all obstacles; they

were despised because of their humble birth, yet oft-times forced their enemies to bow to the Spirit's supremacy. In all things they proved themselves valiant and true, and passed to their reward, having established the foundation of a Church which has done much to alleviate the lot of the labourer. As to the men who offered such opposition to the preaching of the Methodists, an anecdote will shed more light on them than many pages of analysis. In the hamlet of Southdown lived a wild and lawless family, herculean fishers, and smugglers all. But it chanced that the force of the Gospel preached by Wesley converted one of the brothers, who renounced pagan habits, with the result that strife and enmity rent the family. One night, the brothers had arranged to run a contraband cargo, but the Preventive men got wind of it, and seized the craft ere she landed. Believing this disaster could only have occurred by some one divulging the secret, they suspected their pious brother, and determined to avenge themselves. One afternoon, when the suspect fisherman was attending to his lobster pots, the brothers manned their small cutter and wore away up the coast, and then drove straight down upon the hapless boat, cutting it in twain, but not effecting their purpose, for its occupant swam ashore. A few days afterwards, on his return from a distant "preachen sarvice," he found

his little cottage burnt to the ground, and went inland to a neighbour's house, an exile from home. Subsequently, however, all the family became fervent Methodists, and with their own hands built a tiny meeting place so near to the edge of the cliff that the spray lashes its thatched roof in stormy weather.

One naval hero of renown has been bred by Wessex. Sir Thomas Masterton Hardy was born in the village of Portisham, 1769; his career was closely linked with Nelson's, the memory of it being perpetuated by a monument on Blagdon Hill. But Wessex has also had its poets, chief among them being William Barnes, the first noteworthy exponent of its rural life, whose influence is as wholesome as the bright-cheeked maidens of Blackmore Vale, where he was born in the year 1800. First a solicitor's clerk, then a schoolmaster, finally a clergyman, and always a poet resident in his native county, his attainments in English art were unique. The medium in which he worked, the dialect of the county, presented initial difficulties only to be understood by those familiar with the dialect of the true Dorset rustic, for many words of the vernacular speech are withered and marred by the disabilities of toilsome life, and sound harsh in the sensitive ear. It is not hard to convey lovely impressions, if words of beauty, hallowed by classical usage, can be chosen; but it is

only given to a genius to breathe musical being into a dialect of no artistic importance, and transfigure it with the glow of poetry. The capacity of vision, and the power to love, do not always go hand in hand, and are not always found coincident as they were in the case of William Barnes, whose affection for the country folk was intense, and whose knowledge of them equalled his affection. Noticing the absence of "plague spots" in his pictures of rural life, certain critics accused him of partial views and inartistic blindness to the social evils of village life. Notwithstanding these charges, his outlook on existence was benignly wide, his position of curate and then rector in two different parishes giving him signal opportunities of exercising his keen perceptions. Here and there the shadow of evil darkened his poems, though in the majority of them the Dorset poet claimed the right of the artist to select—not to photograph—to paint the humours, and omit the dreary sins, to weave garlands wholly of sweet savour, rather than mingle with them weeds of ill odour. William Barnes is not placed too high when of Englishmen he is stated to be the first of purely pastoral poets. The tender winds of Wessex seem to float out of his tranquil pages, fragrant with the scent of the old-world flowers that grew in the gardens of quaint folk to whom the poet has given a share

of immortality. During his lifetime William Barnes shunned notoriety, ignored the great world, and allowed it to discover the merits of his work,—a good example to lesser poets of our own day, who would mount to the heights of Parnassus on the laudatory breath of a cult. It would be unseemly to take leave of this Doric singer without hearing one snatch of his music, which is quoted from "Evenèn, an' Maïdens out at Door."

Now the sheädes o' the elems do stratch mwore an' mwore
Vrom the low-zinkèn zun in the west o' the sky;
An' the maïdens do stand out in clusters avore
The doors, vor to chatty an' zee vo'k goo by.

* * * *

An' the times have a-been—but they can't be noo mwore,
When I had my jay under evenèn's dim sky;
When my Fanny did stan' out wi' others avore
Her door, vor to chatty, an' zee vo'k goo by.

* * * *

An' zoo smile, happy maïdens! vor every feäce,
As the zummers do come, an' the years do roll by;
Will zoon sadden, or goo vur away vrom the pleäce,
Or else, lik' my Fanny, will wither an' die.

* * * *

Vor daughters ha' mornèn when mothers ha' night;
And there's beauty alive when the feäirest is dead:
As when woone sparklèn weäve do zink down vrom the light,
Another do come up an' catch it instead.

* * * *

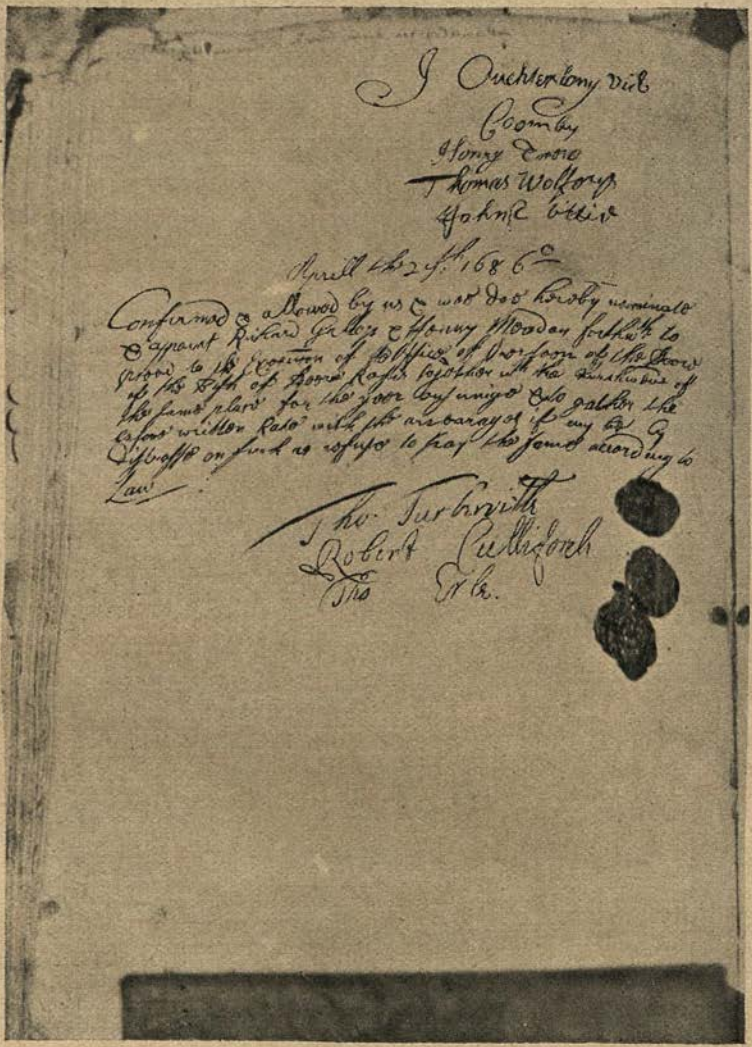
Zoo smile on, happy maïdens! but I shall noo mwore
Zee the maïd I do miss under evenèn's dim sky;
An' my heart is a-touch'd to zee you out avore
The doors, vor to chatty, an' zee vo'k goo by.

Wessex life glided into tranquil waters at the dawn of the nineteenth century, though the fear of the Napoleonic invasion thrilled the countryside into war-like activities, and created a hectic spirit of unrest. Beacons were erected along the coast, ready to be fired when the enemy was sighted, the accidental ignition of one of them "r'aring the pleace," as Mr. Thomas Hardy described in *The Trumpet Major*. The solemn stateliness of Court life was a picture flashed by time upon the background of the county's chief watering-place, brought into renown by George III making it his summer retreat, and henceforth the "quality" of the land flocked thither, to be awesomely gazed at by tradesmen and rustics from the surrounding villages, who had never before seen such exquisite specimens of the human race.

At Radipole, near Weymouth, where Anne Garland (The Trumpet Major) met George III, a royal fête took place, when the *Times* published the following report :—

"WEYMOUTH, *Saturday, Aug.* 1.

"This morning their Majesties and the Princesses rode in their carriages to the Parsonage House at Radipole, where a fête was given by Her Majesty. Her Royal Highness Princess Elizabeth, under whose direction the entertainment was conducted, previously attended with Viscountess Sudley to receive the Royal



SIGNATURE OF THO. TURBERVILLE—FROM AN AUTHENTIC DOCUMENT

Photo by Flisher, Weymouth

Family, who on their arrival were conducted by Her Royal Highness to the tent apportioned for them, Mrs. Taylor and Mrs. Penley, the comedians, as country girls, strewing the way with flowers. The amusements commenced with a morning masquerade, Mrs. Taylor singing a sea song in the attire of a sailor. The comedians then assuming the characters of gipsies, seated under a hedge, with the pot boiling on the fire, sung several sprightly songs; after which the Royal Family proceeded to an elegant marquee, six tents being fixed for the nobility, to the amount of 200 persons, where they partook of a most elegant dinner, served up in a superb style. While their Majesties and company were at dinner, Mr. Elliston, in the character of a monk, came to announce the victory over the invincible army, and Mr. Sandford, dressed as an Highland officer, delivered a panegyric on the valour of British soldiers and sailors, and having been admitted, laid the Invincible Standard, taken from the French, at His Majesty's feet, and three of the Staffordshire militia sung a song composed for the occasion. As soon as the dinner was over, the Staffordshire, North Devon, and the band of the Scotch Greys struck up 'God Save the King.' Every person standing up drank to the 'King's Good Health and a long continuance.' The health of Her Majesty, His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, the Duke of York and

the Army, the Marquis Cornwallis and Admiral Nelson were then given, the band playing 'Rule, Britannia' and 'Britons Strike Home.' As soon as the entertainment was over, their Majesties and company went into the fair which Princess Elizabeth had ordered to be held, which consisted of milliners' shops, lottery offices, toy shops, libraries, and shows. His Majesty put into the lottery, and all the nobility purchased something. A Mr. Penley, in the character of a Merry Andrew, rode about the fair seated on an ass, and his humour excited much pleasantry. Their Majesties then proceeded to a delightful shade, the awning being constructed of the Royal Standard, the different colours and union flag of the British Army and Navy, a space being allotted for dancing. At the moment the Royal Family entered this retreat, Mr. Elliston, in the uniform of a lieutenant in the navy, and Messrs. Sandford and Taylor, with near fifty persons, in the character of sailors, approached the Royal presence, and on Mr. Sandford exclaiming 'Messmates, see our Beloved Monarch,' the comedians retired into another part of the gardens, and delivered an exordium on British loyalty, which was succeeded by Mr. Taylor singing 'God Save the King' and 'Rule Britannia' in full chorus by the sailors. The Princesses and all the nobility wore bandeaus and ribbons with the words in gold letters 'Long Live the King and Queen'

distributed by the Princess Elizabeth. The Royal Standard and union flags, and the British colours from the ships, were displayed on the ground. Country dances then commenced. The first was led down by Lord Amelius Beauclerk and the Princess Augusta. The second by the Duke of Cumberland and Princess Elizabeth. The third by Prince Adolphus and Princess Mary. It was a remarkably fine day, which added to the pleasure of the scene. At six o'clock the Royal Family returned to the Lodge, and afterwards visited the theatre."

Staunchly wedded to the old-time methods of threshing, the introduction of machines for that purpose caused deep discontent and actual rioting thirty years after the French scare, but force of circumstances compelled the rustics to recognize the inevitableness of progress, and a period of sullen calm ensued. In 1872 the agricultural labourer developed into a political entity, being dragged out of his obscurity by Joseph Arch, a Methodist local preacher, who inspired the agrarian workers with modest ideals of material betterment. The movement started in Warwickshire, and spreading to other places through the zeal of its apostle, finally awoke Wessexmen to a sense of their needs, and thus the partial enfranchisement of the peasantry was effected.

Legends are to a country what the sunset is to the landscape—blot out the glory from the evening sky, and the earth is cold and unmagical. Perhaps no name in English annals has such romantic suggestiveness as King Arthur's, a name around which scholars have battled for generations. Concerning him Caxton wrote in his prologue to the famous history of the Marvellous Adventures: "Divers men hold opinion that there was no such Arthur, and that all such books as be made of him be but feigned and fables, because that some chroniclers make of him no mention, nor any of his knights." Without entering into this controversy, it is sufficient for the present purpose to accept the view that the conception of the peerless Arthur grew out of the exploits of Arturin, a Celtic monarch who fought against the Saxons, and waged a terrible battle against them in Wessex at Mons Badonicus, near Wimborne. Out of the haze of uncertainty emerges the probability of this conflict forming the foundation for the legendary account of the "grim battle to the West," with all its pathos of desolation, vanished ideals, and faithless knights, which receded into forgetfulness as Arthur neared the "Island valley of Avilion," said to have been situated at Glastonbury. It is pleasant for West countrymen to think of their land being enwoven with the visionary splendours of such a poetic story; it is reasonable

for them to suppose the germs of this romance partly emanated from the deeds of a king who fought on their soil, and it is gratifying to remember that the reputed Round Table rests at Winchester, the ancient capital of the Wessex kingdom.

Conscious humour is rarely allied to fabulous tales, perhaps because the men who originated them were solemnized by the contemplation of the giants they were creating out of ordinary statured human beings. There is a legend about St. Augustine's connexion with Cerne Abbas, however, which wears an air of probability in its account of the horseplay of some early Wessexmen, and but for the indignity offered to a holy man, it would verge on the realm of comedy. According to William of Malmesbury, the great prelate having converted Kent to the Christian faith, travelled over the rest of the English provinces as far as Ethelbert's dominions extended, and then visited Cerne Abbas. As a token of the significance of the mission, St. Augustine destroyed the idol, Heil, and thereby dismayed and incensed its worshippers, who retired to plot their revenge. Meanwhile, the company felt weary and thirsty, and St. Augustine struck his staff into the ground and "fetched out a crystal fountain." Ere, however, the apostolic band could refresh themselves the inhabitants advanced, and with quite a modern appreciation of the power of ridicule, fastened

the tails of cows to the garments of St. Augustine and his companions, and drove them from the place. Wherefore, in punishment of this persecution, "all that generation had that given them which they in contempt had fastened on these holy men." General credence was given to this legend till 1774, and until that period the people of Cerne imagined the posterity of those who abused St. Augustine still remained, and were distinguished by caudal appendages of moderate length.

Sympathy of aspiration unites St. Augustine with Edward the Martyr, some time king of the West Saxons. All the elements of a great romantic poem exist in the legend of the king's hapless death, and marvellous canonization. One evening, just before the dawn of the tenth century, King Edward was resting in a wood near Wareham. Listlessly the reins fell from his hands; the ardours of the chase had fatigued him, and while his horse browsed the herbage, he allowed his mind to float on the bosom of the peaceful hour, watching the red sun-flash on leaf and tangled undergrowth with the indolence of healthy exhaustion. Having lost his attendants, he was enjoying the lack of companionship which rarely fell to the lot of a prince even in those days, when he recollected some of his kin resided not far off in the Castle of Corfe, and decided to pay them a visit. Now Elfrida,

his mother-in-law, learnt of his presence in the neighbourhood, and her cheeks flushed, not with joy but hate, because she wished to set her own son upon the throne he occupied. Then a fell purpose flashed into her heart, and gathering together a choice retinue of trusty followers, she rode to the Castle gate in debonnaire mood, as one bent on pleasuring it in the green woods. Almost immediately Elfrida descried a lonely horseman, and hastily despatched a man to fetch a goblet of wine, seemingly with the kindly intention of refreshing the royal hunter. Suspecting no ill, Edward reined up his steed, but refused to dismount ere he had seen his brother. With laughing protestations on her lips, Elfrida pricked her horse to his side, and handing him the cup, bent forward to give him the kiss of welcome. Thirsty with the dusty ride, Edward lifted the goblet and drank eagerly, but ere he had drained it she stabbed him in the back, and fled from the spot, followed by her dismayed attendants. Edward's corpse struck the neck of the horse and thudded to the ground, his foot being yet in the stirrup. The animal started into a gallop, its flanks dank with stains of crimson in the dusk, its pace madly quickened by the ricochet of the body over the flinty road. Some of Elfrida's men discovered him mangled and bruised and dead, and conveyed him to a mean house, where lived a

blind woman, who, it is said, awakened at midnight with restored eyesight, the house being radiant with light. Hearing of this marvel, Elfrida had the body removed and concealed in a well in a marshy place, where the year following it was found by some devout person, the spot being discovered to them by the illumination of a pillar of fire. Ever after the well yielded pure and sweet water, good for the healing of the infirm, being known as St. Edward's fountain. The corpse was removed to the church of St. Mary, Wareham; three years afterwards it was found to be in an uncorrupted condition, when it was removed to Shaftesbury, a great concourse of people, lay and ecclesiastical, accompanying the bier, among them being two lame persons who were cured on approaching the sacred relic. . . . Reaping a full harvest of misery from her crime, Elfrida prepared to seek relief by offering up prayers at the martyr's tomb, but all her skill could not prevent the horse she rode from turning tail, and going in an opposite direction; neither would her feet carry her to the desired destination. Remorse then drove Elfrida to good deeds, and she founded two nunneries, one in Wiltshire and the other in Hants; shame drove the repentant woman to shroud herself in conventual habit, and she died in one of the religious houses she had established, her remaining years being spent in

mortifications and austerities. Thus it came about that the tragedy of an old Wessex king formed the nucleus of a marvellous legend, and gave him an entrance into the ranks of the martyrs.

DIALECT

The vitality of the dialect in the face of the wear and tear of nearly a thousand years is extraordinary; the purity of its main derivation from the Saxon is undoubted, there being scant intermixture of Latin and Norman words. Its picturesque and homely virility is remotely akin to the language of the unrevised edition of the Bible, the kinship being strengthend not only by the use of words now archaic, but by occasional similarity in sentence construction. The "go to" of Scripture lives on in the expression "set to," and the use of "do" in the emphatic form in which it is found in the Prayer Book is retained—"We 'do' give Thee most humble and hearty thanks."

In many respects the Dorset vernacular cannot be differentiated from the Somerset dialect, while, on the other hand, it has considerable likeness to Devon folk speech. But this is not the place for a scientific study of the dialect, though a thorough comparison of it with standard English is a fascinating study for the philologist; nevertheless, a few peculiarities

of pronunciation and construction will not be amiss. The letter f is given the sound of v, as in "vo'k," "folk," and s is usually hardened to z. For the long a in "cake" and the single vowel sound in "bean," double sounds are substituted; thus, "ceäke," "beän." There is a proneness to drop r before s, as in "wo'se for "worse," and a steady shifting of s for p, as in "clapse" for "clasp." A few nouns still hold the old plural ending en for s—cheesen, housen, vu'zen and stwonen. The Rev. William Barnes quoted a current saying in his time which still holds good: "It has been said of this folk speech that everything is 'he' but a tom-cat, which is termed 'she.'" The frequent use of the masculine personal pronoun is certainly noteworthy; of a tree it is even said: "he's a-cut down."

Without entering further into the theory, a comparison in point of expression is here given. The passage chosen to represent the standard English is from Ruskin's *Crown of Wild Olive*, a rendering of which in dialect form is then given with as much phonetic exactness as possible.

"Men will be taught that an existence of play sustained by the blood of other creatures is a good existence for gnats and jelly-fish, but not for men; that neither days nor lives can be made holy or noble by doing nothing in them; that the best prayer at the

beginning of a day is that we may not lose its moments, and the best grace before meat the consciousness that we have earned our dinner."

"Men will be a-teached that litsome sperrets a-kept up by the plight of vo'k, be a tidy liven vor gnatses an' jally-vish, but not vor the likes o' we; that days an' lives should be chockful o' work to mak'en upright an' holy; that the bestest prayer at the dawnen be to gi'e the goo-bye to dawdlen, an' the bestest greace avore a-setten down to woone's victuals be the veelen in the heart that the bit an' drap have been a-zweated vor."

Rare instinct is shown in the treatment of the dialect in the Wessex novels; an absolute reproduction of it would have been impossible as a generally intelligible literary medium, and Mr. Thomas Hardy has given his readers the true racial flavour of the folk speech without wearying them with a pedantic fidelity to it. For those who wish to extend their knowledge of the dialect, or to get at the meaning of expressions hitherto unknown or misunderstood, a representative list of words has been compiled.

GLOSSARY

A'ra : Ever a.
Avroze : Frozen.
Agean : Again, against.
Aggy : To gather eggs.
Aish : The ash.
Al's : All this.
Anigh : Near to.
Any-when : At any time.
A-piggy-back : The carrying of children across the shoulder.
A-stooded : Sunk into the ground.
Athirt : Across.
Avore : Before.
Ax : To ask.
Backhouse : Outhouse.
Bad : Synonym for ill.
Ballyrag : To scold.
Bandy lags : Crooked legs.
Bankrout : Bankrupt.
Barken : Barton.
Batch : Hillock.
Beas' : Beast.
Baven : A faggot of untrimmed branches.
Becall : To deride.
Beens : Because.
Beknown : Known about.
Bibber : To shiver with the cold.
Bide : To dwell.
Biddle : A beetle.
Bird-kippy : To keep birds from the corn.
Bissen : Bist not.

Bit-an'-drap : A meal.
Blather : An uproar.
Blether : To bleat.
Blooth : Blossom.
Blue-vinny : Blue mouldy.
Bottom : Steadfastness.
Boys'-love : The herb Southernwood.
Brags : Boasting.
Brassen : Made of brass.
Bremble : Bramble.
Breze : To press down.
Bruckly : Brittle.
Bundle : To bound quickly.
Busgins : Short gaiters.
Bumbye : Bye-and-bye.
Caddle : Muddle.
Call hwome : Announcement of the banns.
Cradlehood : Infancy.
Chockvul : Replete.
Clim' : To climb.
Car' : To carry.
Cas'n : Canst not.
Chammer : Chamber.
Chaw : To chew.
Chetterlings or chittlens : The entrails of a pig.
Chippols : Young onions.
Chimley : Chimney.
Chimp : To chimp potatoes—to break off the shoots.
Cider ring : Cider press.
Clacker : A rattle.
Clavy : Mantelpiece.
Clipse : To clasp.
Clote : Yellow water lily.
Cockle : To tangle.

Coll : To embrace.
Cowlease : An unmown field.
Count : To guess.
Crips : Crisp.
Croopy : To stoop.
Crousty : Ill-humoured.
Cubby-hole : A snug place for a child.
Culver : Wood pigeon.
Cwoffer : Coffer.
Dabster : An expert.
Dadder : To bewilder.
Drawlatcheten : Lazy.
Dewbit : The first meal of the morning.
Dank : Damp.
Dirn : The side post of a doorway.
Dap : To bound.
Dead-alive : Apathetic.
Didden : Did not.
Dousty : Dusty.
Dout : Extinguish.
Drashel : Threshold.
Drong : A narrow passage.
Drow : To throw.
Drinky : Intoxicated.
Duckish : Dull, dark.
Eale : Ale.
Easement : Relief.
Effets : Newts.
Ees : Yes.
Elem : Elm.
Empt : To empty.
Emmets : Ants.
Eth : Earth.
Evemen : Evening.

Faddle : A bundle.
Fall : Autumn.
Fantod : A fuss.
Feacen : Faces.
Fess : Proud.
Figgety-pudden : Plum pudding.
Flummocks : To frighten.
Footy : Insignificant.
Furmenty : Frumenty.
Gad : A stake.
Gawk : To gape.
Gear : Tackle, utensils.
Geate : Gate.
Gi'e : To give.
Gi'e out : Give way, renounce.
Gifts : White spots on the finger nail.
Gil'cup : Buttercup.
Girt : Great.
Goocoo : Cuckoo.
Goo wi' : To court.
Gramfer : Grandfather.
Grammer : Grandmother.
Gwain : Going.
Gwains-on : Riotous behaviour.
Haggler : Itinerant dealer.
Hag-rod : Bewitched.
Handy : Approximate.
Han'-pat : Ready at hand.
Haps : To fasten.
Hassen : Hast not.
Hedlen : Headlong.
Heel-tap : Residue of liquor in a cask.
Hele : To pour out.
Het : Heat.

Hide : To whip.
Heth : Hearth.
Hold-wi' : To agree with.
Hoboo : A child's name for a horse.
Hwome : Home.
Jis' : Just.
Joppety-joppety : Nervous trepidation.
Keep : Food for cattle.
Knap : Knoll, rising ground.
Knot (in flower knot) : Flower bed.
Laggens : Leggings.
Lease : To glean after the reapers.
Leaze : Field stocked through the summer.
Leery : Hungry.
Lew or *Lewth* : Sheltered from the wind.
Limber : Flaccid.
Litsome : Cheerful.
Litter : Confusion.
Litty : Graceful bodily motion.
Lumpy : Heavy.
Maggotty : Fanciful.
Main : Mighty.
Marten : A barren heifer.
Mel : To meddle.
Miff : A slight quarrel.
Mixen : Dung heap.
Mistrustful : Suspicious.
Nammet : Noon meat, luncheon.
Near : Miserly.
Nesh : Tender.
Nettlens : A pig's inwards.
Nipper : Small boy.
Nirrup : Donkey.
Nippy : Sharp.

Nit: Not yet.
Nitch: A bundle of wood as large as a man can carry.
Noggerhead: Blockhead.
Nu'ss: Nurse.
Oben: To open.
Orts: Remnants of fodder.
Outstep: Remote.
Overlook: To bewitch.
Overright: Opposite.
Pank: To pant.
Pantiles: Roof tiles.
Peart: Lively.
Pease: To ooze.
Pelt: A fit of anger.
Pinsle: Pimple.
Pleazen: Places.
Plim: To swell.
Plush: To plush a hedge is to cut the stems near the ground, and turn the branches down after trimming them to a suitable size.
Pole: The nape of the neck.
Pook: Cones of wheat.
Pucksy: Miry.
Pummy: Apple pummace from the cider-wring.
Put-up-wi': Patiently bear with.
Quag: Quagmire.
Quar': Quarry.
Quob: To quiver.
Raft: To rouse oneself.
Rale: To walk.
Rafty: Rancid.
Ramshackle: Rickety, broken down.
Ramshacklum: Good for nothing.

Randy : Merry making.
Ratch : To stretch.
Rate : To scold.
Rathe : Early.
Ray : To array, dress.
Reddick : Robin.
Reaves : The ladder-like framework of a waggon.
Reed : Wheat straw drawn for thatching purposes.
Reeve : To unravel.
Rig : To walk with difficulty.
Rine : Rind.
Rise : To raise.
Rong : The step of a ladder.
Rowse : To scare off.
Ruff : A roof.
Run down : To depreciate.
Sarch : To search.
Sassy : Impudent.
Scram : Small, awkward.
Scrimpy : Shrivelled.
Scuff : To walk in a slipshod fashion.
Shacklen : Loose limbed.
Shard : A broken piece of wood or pottery.
Showl : Shovel.
Shod : To shed.
Shroud : To prune the heads of timber trees.
Sight : Number, quantity.
Sive : A scythe.
Skew-whiff : Aslant.
Skiffy : Left-handed.
Skiver : A skewer.
Sluck-abed : A sluggard.
Smitch : A cloud of dust.
Snags : Sloe berries.

Snoff : Candle snuff.
Soggy : Saturated,
Span-new : Wholly clean or new.
Spar-gads : Sticks to be split into spars.
Speaker : A stake on which to carry a bundle.
Sprack : Active.
Spry : Lively.
Staddle : The framework of a rick.
Stud : Mystified.
Taffety : Fanciful, dainty in appetite.
Taffle : Tangle.
Teaken : An agitation.
Teave : To struggle.
Tell : To reckon.
Tetchy : Irritable.
Thick : That.
Thirtover : Perverse.
Tilty : Peevish.
Tinklebobs : Icicles.
Tole : To allure
T'other : The other.
Traipse : To tramp.
Trig : Sound and firm.
Turmit : Turnip.
Twite : To reproach
Twanketen : Melancholy.
Unbeknown : Strange, unfamiliar.
Undercreepen : Sly, hypocritical.
Unray : To undress.
Upsides-wi' : To be even with.
Urge : To retch.
Vall to : Begin.
Valie : Value.
Varden : Farthing.

Versey : To versey, to read the Bible verse by verse.
Vitty : Proper.
Vlinders : Splinters.
Volly : To follow.
Vower : Four.
Vu'z : Furze.
Wag : To stir.
Wants : Moles.
Werden : Were not.
Werret : To worry.
Whindlen : Weakly.
Whist : A stye ; inflammation of the eye.
Whicker : To neigh.
Whiver : To hover.
Wink : A winch or crank.
Wizzen or *weazan* : The windpipe.
Wopsy : Wasp.
Wrack : Consequences.
Yeo : An ewe ; still preserved in standard English as in the word yeoman.
Yop : To talk rapidly.
Yoller : Yellow.
Zeale : Sack.
Zebn : Seven.
Zew : Sow or sew.
Zummat : Something.
Zummerleaze : Unmown grass for summer feed.
Zwail : To swagger.
Zweal : To scorch.

WESSEX PLACE NAMES IDENTIFIED

South Wessex: Dorset.
Mid Wessex: Wiltshire.
Upper Wessex: Hampshire.
Casterbridge: Dorchester.
Budmouth Regis: Weymouth.
Warborne: Wimborne.
Christminster: Oxford.
Po'sham Portisham.
Corvsgate Castle: Corfe Castle.
Shotsford: Blandford.
Havenpool: Poole.
King's Hintock Court: Melbury House.
Weatherbury: Puddletown.
Welland House: Charborough.
Uplandtowers: St. Giles, Wimborne.
Chaseborough: Cranborne.
The Chase: Cranborne Chase.
Melchester: Salisbury.

Shaston: Shaftesbury.
Port Bredy: Bridport.
Chalk Newton: Maiden Newton.
Wellbridge: Wool (Manor House).
Evershead: Evershot.
Sandbourne: Bournemouth.
Knollsea: Swanage.
Wintoncester: Winchester.
Stourcastle: Stourminster.
The Great Plain: Salisbury Plain.
Kingsbere: Bere Regis.
Stagfoot Lane: Hartfoot Lane.
Greenhill: Woodbury Hill.
Nuzzlebury: Hazelbury.
Middleton Abbey: Milton Abbey.
Emminster: Beaminster.
Sherton Abbas: Sherborne.
Abbot's Cernel: Cerne Abbas.
Anglebury: Wareham.
Toneborough: Taunton.
Weydon Priors: Weyhill, Hants.
Chene Manor: Canford Manor, near Wimborne.
Marlott: Marnhull, vale of Blackmoor.
Great Hintock: Minterne Magna.
Little Hintock: Melbury St. Osborne.
Egdon Heath: The stretch of heath between Dorchester and Wareham.

Mellstock: Stinsford.
Overcombe: Sutton, near Weymouth.
Marygreen: Fawley Magna.
Troytown: Roy-town.
Longpuddle: Piddlehinton.
Tolchurch: Tolpuddle.
East Egdon: Affpuddle.
Nether Mynton: Owermoigne.
Knapwater House: Kingston House.
Stickleford: Tincleton.
Millpond St. Jude: Milborne St. Andrews.
Great Hintock House: Turnworth House.
Ivell: Yeovil.
Oxwell: Poxwell.
Castle Boterel: Boscastle.
Alfredstown: Wantage.
Stoke-Barehills: Basingstoke.

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NOTE.—The Wessex Novels are now only issued by Messrs. Harper & Brothers in the uniform six shilling edition with an etching by H. Macbeth-Raeburn and a map of Wessex. This edition first appeared during the latter end of 1895 and the early part of 1896, one volume a month, and was issued by Messrs. Osgood, M'Ilvaine & Co., who were incorporated in Messrs. Harper & Bros. in 1897. Many of the novels appeared as serials in the first place, but it has only been thought necessary to note their first appearance in book form.

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AUTHOR'S NOTE.—Every effort has been made to make the Bibliography as succinct and accurate as possible. The notification of any errors or omissions will be gratefully acknowledged.

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